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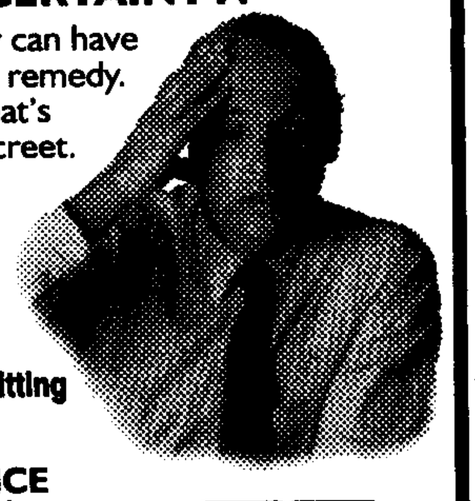

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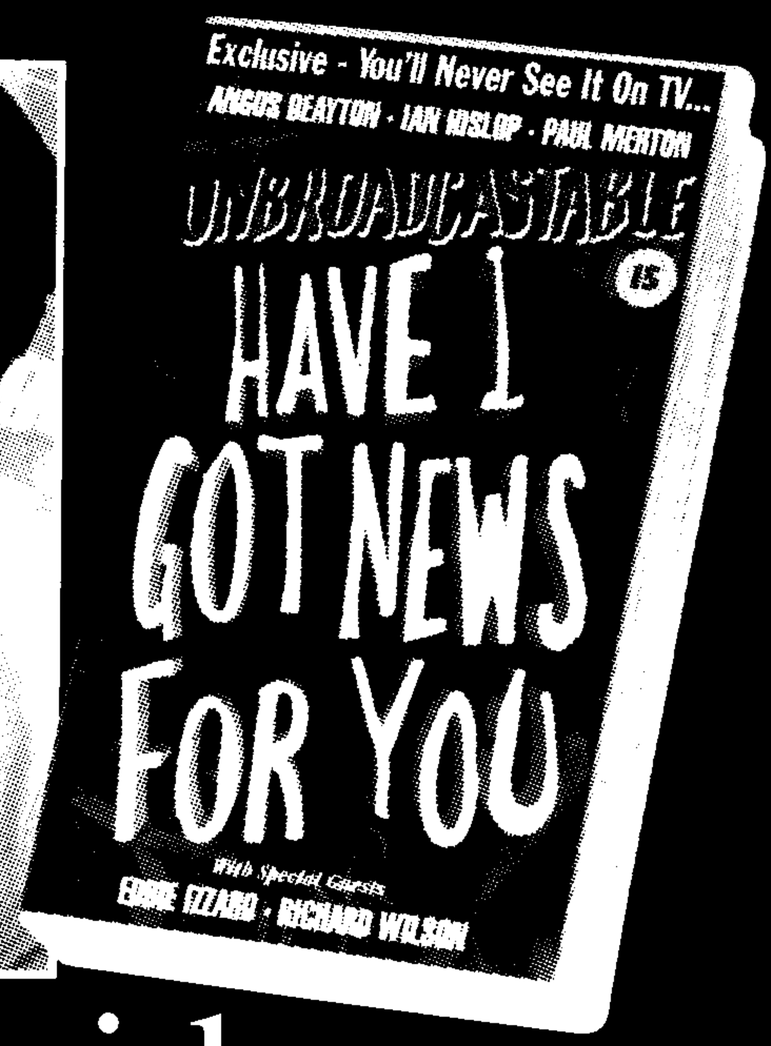
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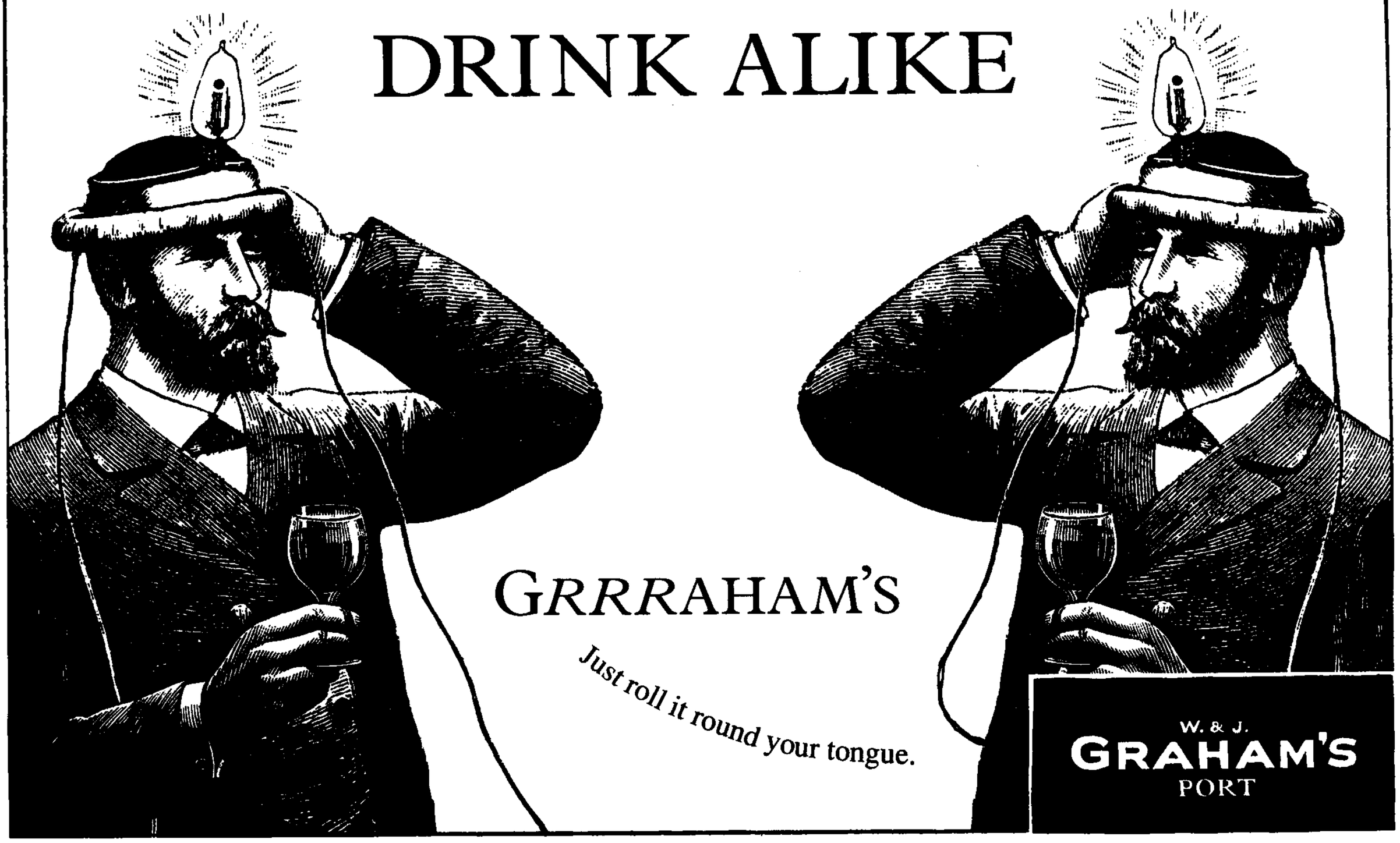

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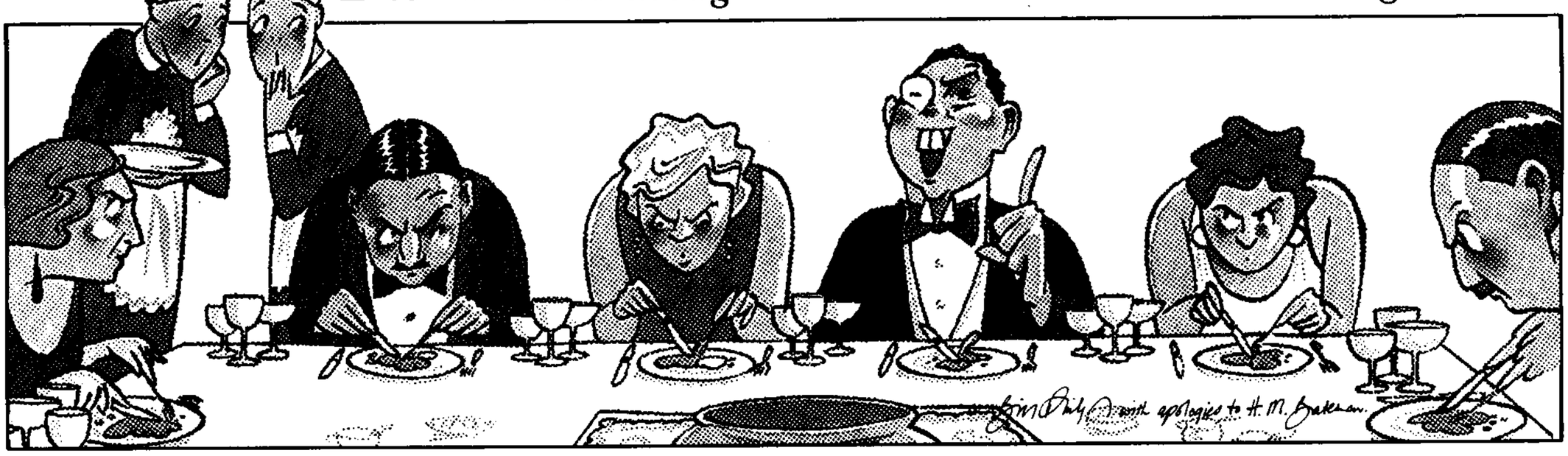

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Gnome

THERE has been an absurdly disproportionate fuss over the insignificant matter of my train ticket last month from Waterloo to Little Dodging in Surrey.

Let me put the record straight. On my arrival at Waterloo Station I boarded the 17:57 Network West Express and immediately asked a uniformed man for a first class single. "This is the buffet, sir," he told me and I replied: "In that case I'll have a double."

Imagine my surprise when he presented me with a large glass of gin and tonic instead of the return ticket which, needless to say, I had fully intended to purchase.

Less than an hour later a ticket inspector asked for my ticket and I politely explained the situation to him, saying: "Do you know who I am? I'll have you fired, you snivelling little Jobsworth."

The inspector refused to accept that I was not to blame and referred me to the Managing Director of Network West Express, a Mr Peter Creepy. I followed the standard complaints procedure in such cases, phoning Mr Creepy at home and setting out my reasons for not paying either the fare or any penalty for travelling without a ticket, viz:

1. I am extremely rich and important
2. I am a friend of the Prime Minister's
3. I might well buy Mr Creepy's whole franchise next year and sack him on the spot.

My complaint was duly processed by the relevant Revenue Protection Inspectors and Mr Creepy dropped the telephone receiver in fright *(surely 'the investigation after a full review of the facts'? E.S.).*

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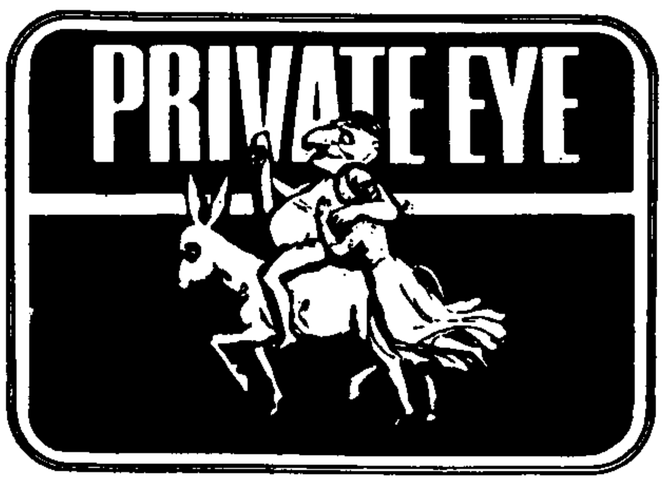

COLOUR SECTION

WHILE defence secretary Michael Portillo had the Tories shrieking in the aisles with his pledge not to "merge our defence cooperation into the European community", he forgot to mention the most ridiculous and expensive item in his ministry's budget.

This is an item that depends entirely on "merging our defence cooperation" with European community countries — the Eurofighter aircraft being built and financed by Britain, Germany, Italy and Spain.

It was designed to meet the threat of Soviet Mig-29 Fulcrums and SU-27 Flankers, a threat that no longer exists. But Portillo continues to argue for the project on the ground that other unspecified countries may be able to buy a dangerous fighter plane force in the international arms market — no doubt from suppliers in the leading European country in that market, Great Britain.

The current estimate for the British Eurofighter effort was £14.9 billion, rather more than the £11.6 billion for Trident. But that is not the final figure. The German national audit office recently estimated the eventual cost at £19.5 billion — or £325 for every man woman and child in Britain. The project was supposed to be finished by December 1998, but everyone agrees it will go on well into the next century. So another £104 million has to be spent refurbishing Tornados and Jaguars.

SINCE leaving the government to fight "the cancer of bent and twisted journalism", Jonathan Aitken has lost none of his appetite for Arab hospitality.

Ten days ago he was at the Dorchester ballroom for the 50th birthday party of Wafic Said, the Syrian financier and a broker on the multi-billion pound Al Yamamah arms deal with Saudi Arabia.

This weekend he will fly first-class to Abu Dhabi on Emirates Airlines with former chancellor Norman Lamont and John Duffield, chairman of Jupiter Tyndall Global Fund plc, the investment firm based in Luxembourg. The purpose of the trip and how it will help Aitken and Lamont's respective constituents in Thanet South and Kingston-upon-Thames is not clear. And Jupiter, which is paying for the week's excursion, is certainly not saying.

So what are the links between the two Tory MPs and Jupiter?

Well, one is that since last November the investment firm has owned a sizeable shareholding in First Philippine Investment Trust, one of whose directors is Norman Lamont. As for Aitken, he has been well-connected in Abu Dhabi since the early 1970s when he worked for Slater Walker.

How useful could Aitken and Lamont be to Jupiter, whose massive investment interests are worldwide? One thing the MPs have in common is that both have held the posts of chief secretary to the treasury and minister for defence procurement.

Aitken and Lamont are flying to the Gulf via Paris and staying one night at the Ritz there. As ever, Mr Aitken is sure to pay his own bill.

CARS — the "Campaign To Rubbish Scott" — has a new recruit: Sir Richard Luce, former sheep in the flock of Lord Howe, chairman of the government's anti-Scott campaign.

Luce resigned from his junior foreign office post when FO ministers accepted responsibility for grovelling so low to the Argentinian dictatorship that they didn't notice the pending invasion of the Falklands. Unlike fellow ministers, however, Luce was back almost at once, scurrying round the FO seeking appropriate guidelines for the sale of arms to Iran or Iraq which were then at war.

The guidelines would make the government's position clear to the world and to the British public, he argued. But no sooner were the guidelines agreed — in October 1984 — than Luce was ordered not to publish them lest they upset British arms deals with Saudi Arabia. Luce complied and the guidelines stayed unpublished for a year.

Luce, the first witness to give evidence to Scott, couldn't explain how he devised guidelines that could be published and then didn't publish them. Now, two and a half years later, he bleats in the *Sunday Telegraph* that the Scott inquiry was "misconceived and misdirected".

He said nothing of the kind at the time in public or private. Indeed, when Scott circulated the entire civil service with his proposals for his hearings, no one — not Sir Robin Butler, cabinet secretary; not Sir Geoffrey Howe; not Sir Richard Luce — had any complaint. Then the inquiry was a device to help the government wriggle off the hook of breaking its own embargoes so everyone praised the integrity of the judge and the fairness of his proceedings. Now Scott has rumbled what went on, his procedures were "misconceived and misdirected".

WAS it wise of busy Sir George Russell, chairman of both Camelot and the Independent Television Commission, to oversee the judging of bids for the new Channel Five?

As the last *Eye* pointed out, Camelot is expected to make £50 million this year thanks to its government franchise to run the lottery and comes in for a lot of very vociferous criticism from Richard Branson, a disappointed lottery bidder, who denounces Camelot and all its works as a "rip-off".

Branson's Virgin's also pitched for Channel Five, of course, and was unsuccessful there too — even though it bid exactly the same as Greg Dyke's winning team. Oddly there was no comment from the ITC about how Russell could preside over a contest for a new television channel in which such an outspoken rival and critic was a bidder.

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"When this is all over I'm standing as a Labour candidate"

NEWS

DAVID MELLOR's attack on the "Lambeth council" values of the national lottery charities board and his scoffing at grants for asylum seekers and mentally-handicapped people from abroad, went down frightfully well with his admirers among the rulers of the gulf states.

Mellor is probably the only man who has been pictured in the press sharing a sofa with three separate Gulf dictators: Saddam Hussein; and the emirs of Bahrein and Kuwait. His chum the emir of Kuwait has just proved *his* humanity to the world by forcing his judges to commute a sentence of death on a woman for stabbing her rapist employer. It was replaced by one hundred lashes.

The gulf dictators persecute and torture people to the point of madness and then cheer Mellor when he argues that if the unfortunates ever get to Britain and apply for asylum, they should be refused any money, even from charity.

PS: Nice Mr Mellor is paid by four arms companies: Shorts; British Aerospace; Vosper Thornycroft; Racal. Is this a record?

WELSH WATER has pumped so much shit into the sea at South beach in Tenby that faecal streptococci levels are ten times the accepted level.

Nevertheless the National Rivers Authority recently agreed to allow Welsh Water to pump out *even more* raw sewage at Tenby by adding the shit from nearby Saundersfoot.

Deanna Morton, a lifeguard, lost her high court challenge to the NRA consent even though it ignores the authority's obligation under European law to maintain standards.

Also intriguing was the judge's ruling that the NRA decision was right because the Welsh office and Ofwat had limited Welsh Water's discretionary budget for environmental projects to £27.3 million. This meant that poor Welsh Water, with profits of only £146 million last year, could not find the money to treat the raw sewage properly and bathers will remain at risk.

YORKSHIRE Water's application for an emergency drought order is still pending at the environment department. So if the drought continues the company will be allowed to introduce rota cuts, turning off water supplies for 24 hours at a time.

Instead of reducing its 28 percent leak rate, Yorkshire Water is spending money on PR: employing a Midlands recruitment company to find it customer relations staff who are good at "dealing with emotionally charged situations".

The reason the company needs good PR people is that rota cuts are expected to put an "additional strain" on the distribution mains which may "cause bursts and increased leakage". Yorkshire Water predicts that customers who have been without water for 24 hours might well go completely ape if their pipes then burst when the water is turned on again.

Private I-I-I!

THIS ISSUE'S rundown of the nation's most self-obsessed columnists, based on the number of incidences of the word "I" per column-inch.

		Ego Rating
1	Zandra Rhodes (Mail 28/10)	4.00
2	Robert Elms (Radio Times 21/10)	2.75
3	Zöe Heller (S. Times 29/10)	2.70
4	Oscar Moore (Grauniad 21/10)	2.64
5	John Lloyd (IoS 28/10)	2.34
6	Anita Chaudhuri (Grauniad 18/10)	2.13
7	John Lyttle (Independent 27/10)	1.83
8	John Diamond (The Times 21/10)	1.55
9	John Diamond (The Times 28/10)	1.42
10	Ian Hislop (Daily Telegraph 28/10)	1.05

Bubblin' under: Michael Winner, Martin van der Weyer, Germaine Greer, Jo Brand.

Street of Shame

MOORE OF THE SAME...

ALTHOUGH new editors have now been installed at the *Daily Telegraph*, *Sunday Telegraph* and *Spectator*, the game of musical chairs at Conrad Black's newspaper empire is far from over.

Frank Johnson arrived at the *Spectator* last week to find the building almost empty: features editor Rebecca Nicolson and home affairs editor Alasdair Palmer had decamped to join Dominic Lawson at the *Sunday Torygraph*. The mag's deputy editor, Anne Applebaum, is also expected to resign shortly and seek political asylum at the London *Evening Standard*. Still, Johnson has brought in one new recruit — Petronella Wyatt, the gormless but glamorous daughter of Lord Wyatt of Weeford.

Over at the *Sunday Telegraph*, Dominic Lawson has already displayed the tact and sensitivity for which he is famous. His first action on arriving at Canary Wharf was to sack a pregnant woman — Lisa Freedman, the editor of the paper's Review. He admitted that he could find no fault with her section, but explained that he needed to create a vacancy so he could employ Rebecca Nicolson, who is godmother to his younger daughter.

Things are rather less cosy at the *Daily Telegraph*, where Charles Moore's appointment of Sarah Sands as his deputy editor has caused alarm and consternation. Sands current employers at the *Evening Standard* are refusing to let has already made her presence felt by writing a long memo to Moore setting out her plans for the paper — which was promptly hacked out of her computer at the *Standard* by Peter McKay and read with great interest, and some amazement, by her future colleagues at Canary Wharf.

According to Sands, the *Telegraph* should not be afraid of pandering to the baser instincts of its "core readership". We should be Michael Howard to Jack Straw. We should be basically friendly and fair-minded but then take people aback with ferocious, militia-style attacks." Phew!

"The *Telegraph*'s reputation for accurate reporting is precious," she continues. "In the *Mail*, news and comment have become indistinguishable." However, "news stories are, of course, alarmist, and we should play on people's fears... We should sell stories hard but just stop short of distortion." Only just, mark you.

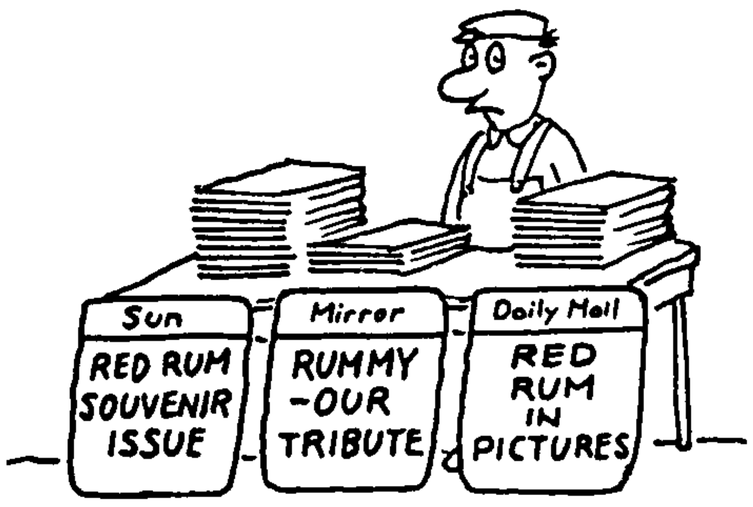
Sands has also drawn up a "dream list" of hacks she wishes to hire. They include Barbara Amiel (a wise choice, since she happens to be the wife of the *Telegraph*'s proprietor), Nicholas Coleridge (another wise choice, since he is an old schoolfriend of Charles Moore) and, weirdly, Bill Deedes (who in fact works at the *Telegraph* already, and has done since the 1930s).

Rather less wisely, she nominates Christopher Hitchens: perhaps she has forgotten that when he wrote for the *Spectator* a few years ago, the mag was bombarded with angry letters from Conrad Black denouncing Hitchens as an anti-American subversive. She also hopes to give jobs to several old chums of hers from the *Standard*, including Peter Oborne, David Rennie, A.N. Wislon and perhaps Stephen Glover — though she puts a question mark beside his name. (Because of this, the hapless hack is now receiving computer-messages from his colleagues addressed to "Stephen Glover?")

More excitingly still, she suggests that A.N. Wislon's 21-year-old daughter, Bee Wilson, would make an excellent "popular culture correspondent", and that former porn model Marina Baker (see last *Eye*) is the obvious choice as "showbiz correspondent".

Telegraph hacks were still digesting their leaked copies of this extraordinary memo when Charles Moore summoned them last Tuesday for a pep talk — whereupon their spirits plummeted still further.

Although in public Moore has paid tribute to the achievements of his predecessor, Max "Hitler" Hastings, at the staff meeting he made it clear he has a pretty low opinion of the paper he has inherited. He was scathing about the news pages, which were often incapable of "seeing what is really happening behind an obvious story"; and he condemned the feature pages as "politically correct" and "too worthy". He also said that the paper had ignored "the concerns of middle-class women" — an odd allegation, since Hastings's deputy, Veronica Wadley, had filled the *Telegraph* with numerous features aimed at precisely that audience.

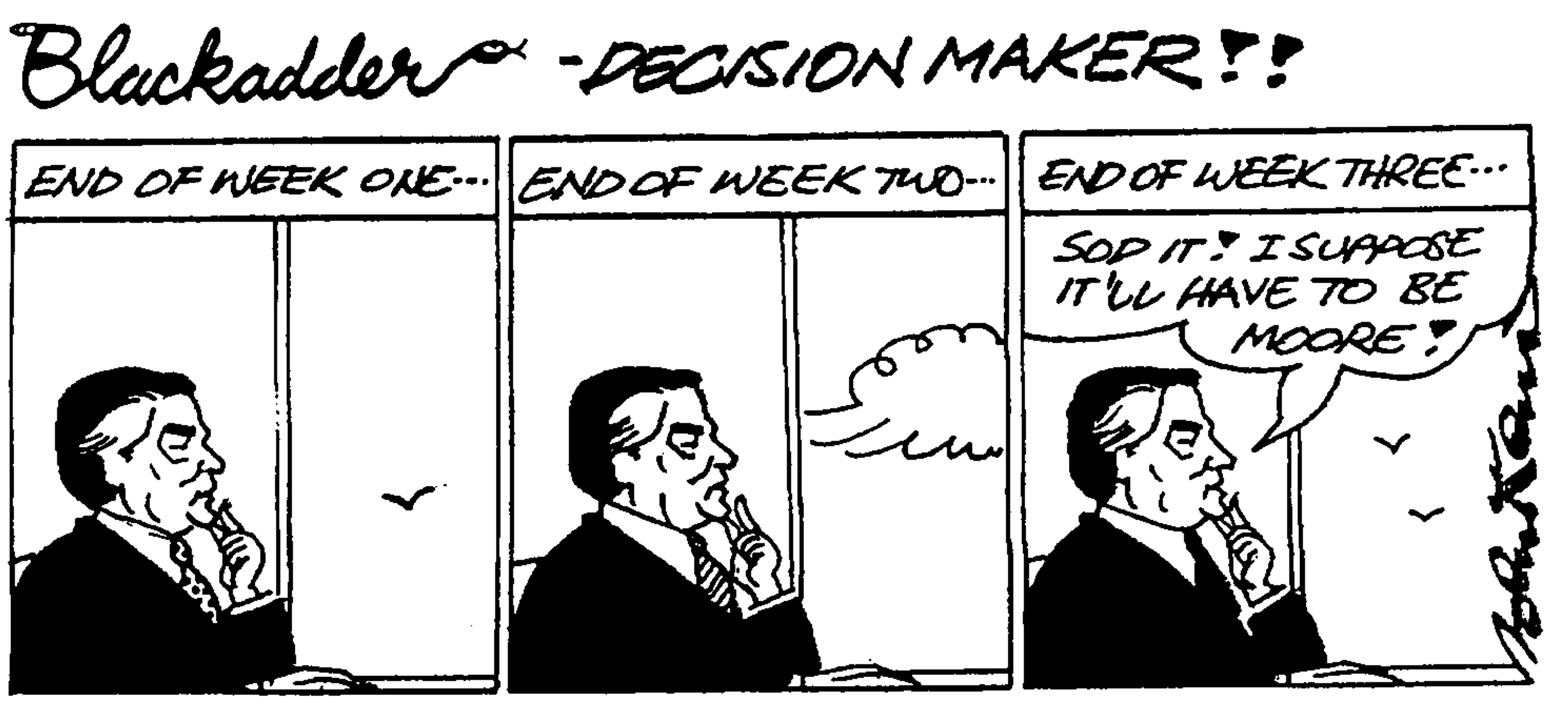


"Talk about flogging a dead horse"

"The leaders are poor," he continued, "and so is some of the leader-page spread." True enough: Max "Hitler" Hastings thought so too, but when he tried to redesign the leader pages a couple of years ago his plan was vetoed by Conrad Black. It was also Black who closed down the paper's successful "You and Your Family" supplement — which carried just the sort of "women-oriented" pieces that Moore says he wishes to encourage. Does Moore realise he is implicitly criticising his own beloved proprietor?

In yet another swipe at his predecessor, the new editor assured hacks that "my aim in general is to replace a culture of fear with a culture of achievement". But his tone suggested otherwise. "I shall certainly punish failure... The best way to earn my disfavour is to engage in turf wars... If I find that anyone is a dog in the manger about this, I shall have that dog put down."

No doubt many pedigree pooches will be "put down" before long. Farewell, Max "Hitler" Hastings; welcome, Charles "Himmler" Moore.



THE "culture of fear" with which Max "Hitler" Hastings ruled the *Torygraph* has begun to seep into his next billet.

At the London *Evening Standard* Peter Bradshaw, who has been standing in for A. N. Wislon as books editor, commissioned a glowing review of Hastings's new book, *Outside Days: More Aventures With Rod And Gun*.

Then the *Mail on Sunday*'s carried a review of the same book by Peter McHackey, who is hoping to make up for pejorative remarks he made about Hitler in the *Standard* some months ago. McHackey's review was cheeky but insidiously reverent, dubbing Hastings's descriptions of hunting and shooting as "lyrical".

One Londoner's Diary hack, the resourceful-when-awake Mark Inglefield, has decided in advance of Max's arrival in January to acquire some proficiency with rod and gun himself. He lodges in London with the pinguid former city editor of the *Sunday Express* Dominic Prince, and was invited by Prince to share a subscription to a pheasant shoot.

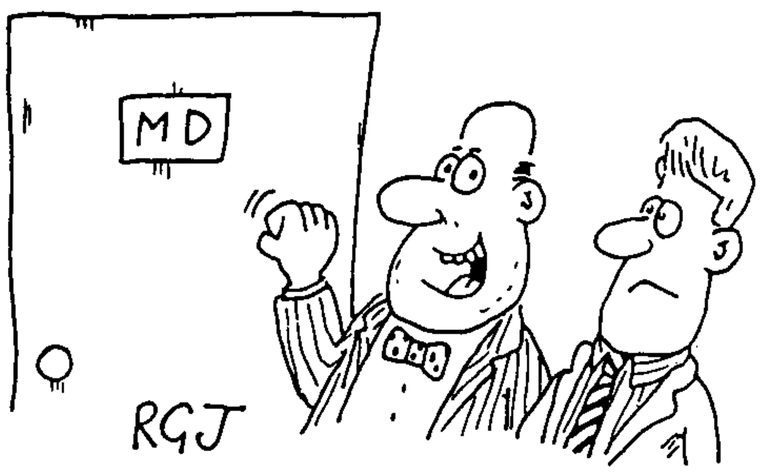
Unfortunately when Prince took Inglefield to practice on clays his performance was unlikely to cheer his incoming editor. Out of 60 clays, Inglefield hit not a single one although he apparently looked the part. Somewhat crestfallen, he offered Prince an explanation for his pathetic score. "Perhaps I need glasses," he said. A pair like Hitler's, maybe.

FEARLESS socialist organ the *Daily Mirror* had a brilliant front-page scoop recently with which to bash the Tories: British Rail had not only waived the ticket fine for Lord Sterling of Zeebrugge but had agreed to delete any computer reference to his misdemeanour.

And what did the great organ of the people do with this exclusive, handed to it on a plate by Labour MP Brian Wilson? Late at night orders came from on high to kill the story, even though it was true. Moral? Don't look in the *Mirror*.

OUTLAW THIS KILLER SPORT screamed the *Daily Express* on its front page after the death of boxer James Murray.

Most *Express* readers are so old they have died by the time they reach the sport on the back page, which is just as well or they would not have been confused by the piece in the same day's paper explaining WHY WE CAN'T BAN BOXING.



"OK, Winslow – let's lick ass""

HACKS at the *Daily Mirror* are betting feverishly on the fate of Brendon "Chucky" Parsons when Piers "Boy" Morgan finally takes over as editor.

"Yes, I have read items about Brendon," Morgan announces magisterially. "But, you know, when newspapers have written about me it has usually been disgracefully inaccurate. One can't believe everything one reads."

He should know. Until recently Morgan edited a paper of record called the *News of the Screws*.

ACCORDING to a letter from one of Garry Bushell's fans, published in the last *Eye*, the bearded buffoon did crack "one good joke" during his recent debut as a stand-up comedian — suggesting that Bobby Brown had broken the news of his marriage break-up by ringing Whitney Houston and saying "Houston, we have a problem".

Alas it transpires that even Garry's "one good joke" was not his own: it was first aired some weeks earlier by the American TV host Jay Leno.

Try again, Garry!

HALLO! THE HEARTWARMING COLUMN

HALLO! *LADY Olga Maitland, MP for Sutton and Cheam, magnificently rallied Tory backbenchers against the lord chancellor's sinful attempt to give rights to "live-in" lovers.*

Lady Olga, of course, is a front-line combatant for the sanctity of marriage, having once run faster than Linford Christie round her own Islington dining table late one night pursued by eager little Norman Lamont (see Eye 857).

HALLO! POOR Andrew Parker Bowles OBE, apparently on his uppers after leaving the army (and his wife), has been sending out his CV and has absentmindedly faxed a copy to the Marquesa.

"I am interested in offering my services as a non-executive director," he says, unadvisedly giving his address as the Wiltshire home of girlfriend Rosemary Pitman, a divorcee.

Parker Bowles then describes himself as "demonstrably successful senior manager accustomed to managing change whilst also completing successfully some of the Army's most sensitive tasks." He then lists, er, Silver Stick in Waiting to HM The Queen, but, no doubt letting modesty overcome him, the former brigadier entirely omits his greatest achievement: as the man who laid down his wife for his country.

Come on Brian, give the chap a job! *Quid pro quo*, eh?

HALLO! TO MONTE'S, the much-hyped £10 million, Arab-backed Knightsbridge club with furniture designed by Princess Margaret's carpenter boy, Linley. Though offering proletarian prices (a plate of pasta for just £19; life membership at a bargain £20,000), no one is ever there.

Finally one lunchtime I spy two diners: Tino Constantine, ex-King of Greece, and the sadly raddled Prince Ernst of Hanover, who is inexplicably wearing dark glasses indoors. Tino and Ernst manfully keep the bored waiters busy by ordering relays of wine. But eventually Tino and Ernst tire of each other's conversation. When I tip-toe from the deserted dinning room both are mumbling into their mobile phones.

The next evening the waxwork-like Duke of Malborough is propping up the bar, amusing himself by pulling peculiar faces and holding his nose as if assailed by a distasteful aroma. Most odd!

HALLO! *AS brilliant Daily Mail diarist Nigel Pratt Dumpster told the Guardian recently: "Oh no, no, no, you can't use a diary to settle scores. This is no medium for personal vendettas."*

This is clearly not the same Nigel Pratt Dumpster who for years has used his "diary" to conduct some of the most viciously personal vendettas in the history of Fleet Street — notably against rival gossip hacks. Oh no.

Pratt also boasted to the Guardian that he does not talk to PRs, to which the Marquesa says: "Balls". In the notorious TV documentary about PR person Liz Brewer, one of whose clients is the lovely Ivana Trump, someone calling himself Nigel Dempster is heard reading back to Brewer his copy relating to a super ball organised by Brewer for La Trump.

HALLO! MANY snide remarks have been made over the years regarding the similarities between Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber's ditties and some more famous operatic arias.

In 1990 the BBC was even forced to issue an internal directive that there were to be no more on-air gags about Sir Andrew's "borrowings". So I am distressed that the great man's former wife Sarah Brightman should now join in this regrettable chorus.

On a recent radio interview, with eminent music critic Bebby Thrower, Miss Brightman trilled cruelly: "I'm singing *Memory* a few notes higher with Italian words and its sounds Pucciniesque!"

HALLO! TO RICHMOND, home of lonely Lady Annabel Goldsmith, for champagne celebrations: Sir James is to return from Paris to stand in the next election for his thrilling new Referendum Party.

Alas there is no sign of Sir Jimmy, but his charming Muslim daughter Jemima is at home.

Jemima, like daddy, is proving an entrepreneur, flogging gold trinkets she has designed to fashionable London chums. They are a snip at less than £500 a bauble — but then there is no wretched Bolshevik talk of a minimum wage in Pakistan!

Lady Annabel, meanwhile, does not mention whether Sir Jimmy will be importing his tiny Paris mistress, the terrifying Mme Laure Boulay de la Meurthe, to the Richmond family home when he returns next year to save the nation.

O·B·N

"...Lady Bayliss kindly made me a chocolate cake last week. It remains, without doubt, one of the great taste sensations of the world. So there."

MICHAEL WINNER
Sunday Times

Submitted by Nicholas Dean.

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

HALLO! CONGRATS to my good friend Eve Pollard. Her daughter Claudia Winkleman, who works at the Mirror Group's brilliant L!VE TV, has at last found a second job: scribbling for glamorous *Tatler* magazine.

As *Tatler* gushes, Claudia is 23 and its "newest and youngest ever contributing editor". Most important of all, however, she is Eve's daughter. Why *Tatler* makes no mention of Claudia's distinguished step-father, Sir Nicholas Lloyd, editor of the *Daily Express*, I cannot imagine.

Elsewhere it is good to see that Auberon Waugh's clever family is getting the praise it deserves. Er, from Auberon Waugh.

Not content with writing about the wedding of younger daughter Daisy in last week's *Spectator*, Waugh also found space to praise a new novel by one Sophia Watson, *Her Husband's Children*. Absent-mindedly he forgot to mention that la Watson also happens to be a daughter.

Meanwhile the new issue of the magazine he edits, *Literary Review*, includes rave reviews of a new novel by Teresa Waugh (the editor's wife) and of a book about music by Alexander Waugh (the editor's son). Oh, and a fascinating article by, er, Sophia Watson.

'The Marquesa'

IN THE TEAROOM

CLARE SHORT's call on the Frost programme for the legalisation of cannabis to be considered prompted predictable headlines about "Blair Fury".

In fact you couldn't slip a king-sized Rizla paper between Tony Blair's "private" opinions on the issue and those of Ms Short. Thus the sound of fists being banged on tables in the Labour leader's office was merely designer rage, got up to appease the Tory tabloids.

However, the bogus furore has provided a timely excuse to resurrect Peter Mandelson and Alastair Campbell's plan to do away with the archaic, democratic practice of electing the shadow cabinet.

These elections always prove a public embarrassment: for example, the absurdly high vote for dotty old Mildred Gordon secured by fat men, high on Federation Ale, in revolt at wimmin's quotas; or the parliamentary party's awkward habit of failing to reelect a front-bench panjandrum — this year Jack Cunningham. Mandelson rightly predicts that the Tories will exploit the 1980 standing order requiring elected members of Labour's shadow cabinet to be put in the real cabinet if Labour wins.

Recent pisspoor performances — like Michael Meacher's over rail privatisation and Jack Straw's against Michael Howard — have prompted Blair to pack his whole team off to Templeton College to learn about leadership. But in his heart he knows this will not do. Mandelson has been busy trying to reassure his boss that there are plenty of able and talented people who would perform brilliantly as cabinet ministers but who are so unpopular with their colleagues, they will never get elected under the present rules. People like... er... Peter Mandelson, for instance.

'Urquhart'

THE prospect of a Blair government is persuading many lobbyists and PR "experts" to hedge their bets and buy into "new" Labour, thus providing a welcome escape route for fleeing apparatchiks.

Leading the escape committee are Dave Gardner and Paul Wheeler, who have both left Walworth Road to join the misnamed Public Policy Unit (in fact a private lobbying company), and Roland Wales.

Meanwhile Jonathan Hopkins, a former adviser to NUT president Doug McAvoy, has been snaffled up by the ubiquitous Ian Greer Associates, and Phil Cole has moved effortlessly from being Labour's London regional organiser to PR firm Burson Marsteller (alighting briefly at the RSPCA on the way).

The prize catch is Colin Byrne, one-time Labour press officer and still a confidant of spin maestro Peter Mandelson: having done a stint at Prince Charles's Business in the Community, he has moved to the lusher pastures of Shandwick Financial PR.

WHILE "new" Labour dumps its extremists, the Tories are busy recruiting them.

Old *growler Tony Benn* stands as a bastion of old Labour in Chesterfield, which he holds with a majority of more than 6,000. The Conservatives have recently chosen their candidate for the constituency: not a wet liberal Tory with a chance of ousting Benn, but Martin Potter, better known as Trainspotter because of his fascinating hobby.

Trainspotter featured in the *Eye* when he was vice chair of the Young Conservatives and renowned for his collection of jolly Nazi regalia. Now resident in Peterborough, he is a close friend of Dr Brian Mawhinney, the party's creepy chairman. With Tory MPs abandoning what they think is a sinking ship before the election, central office is obviously desperate.

HARTLEY BOOTH, the MP for Finchley remembered for his poetic relationship with Commons researcher Emily Barr, is fighting for his political life.

At the next election his seat disappears and becomes Finchley and Golders Green. The local party must decide between Booth and John Marshall, member for Hendon South, and both MPs are fighting a fierce PR battle with lots of worthy photocalls.

Earlier this year both men turned up at Christ's College in Finchley to mark Barnet council's education day, whatever that is. Onlookers were astonished to hear Marshall say: "But it's in my constituency" while Booth hit back: "But all the pupils come from mine."

Marshall is said to get campaign advice from political hack Bruce Anderson, while the Booth camp is considering drafting in Booth's chum John Redwood to make an endorsement speech. When the party meets soon to settle the matter each MP is expected to bus in his own blue-rinse brigade for the vote.

LABOUR spin doctor Peter Mandelson, the MP for Hartlepool, faces a backyard row between old and new Labour.

Members of his constituency party at the party conference in Brighton were surprised to hear a key amendment being read out in their name. The amendment had been submitted by Mandelson's righthand man in Hartlepool, Steve Wallace, and it reproduced a Blairite policy on flexible pension ages.

Local Labour members, who had not been consulted about the amendment, were understandably peeved. So a curious situation arose in which Hartlepool constituency Labour party voted against an amendment it had supposedly proposed.

Back home Wallace was rebuked by constituency chairman Bernard Carr. It was assumed that the amendment had been his idea, and nothing to do with Mandelson or his agent... Bernard Carr.

THE normally responsible — and Tory — *Economist* magazine has printed a staggering allegation: what it calls "a rumour damaging to the prime minister".

When John Major met Michael Heseltine for three hours on the day of the Tory leadership election in July, so the story goes, "they struck a deal". So far, so old. Major also agreed, claims the *Economist*, that "unless the Tories had recovered in the polls by next May, he would step down in Mr Heseltine's favour".

Had it been printed by a less-friendly publication, Mr Major would have been reaching for his lawyer. One should, perhaps, admire the restraint of *The Economist* in not suggesting that Mr Major agreed to the arrangement and has no intention of honouring it.

'Backbiter'

FURTHER EDUCATION NEWS

MORE on Nicholas Tate, government chief adviser on curriculums and a declared traditionalist.

Dr Tate recently insisted in a Council of Europe speech that English history books wrongly concentrate on social issues rather than historical landmarks and heroes, and so do not give pupils a sense of national identity (see *Eye* 883).

Clearly this is not the same Nicholas Tate who as chief executive of the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) oversaw the release of the notorious VE Day video for schools which was criticised for giving Winston Churchill just 14 seconds while stressing the "sexist" elements of the war.

Tate also headed SCAA's history group when it was drawing up the history curriculum which was condemned in a Commons motion signed by 30 MPs for its lack of historical landmarks and heroes. Queen Victoria, the Wars of the Roses, Mary Queen of Scots and Anglo-Saxon kings were all left out of the curriculum decided upon by Tate, the supporter of national identity.

British Gas NEWS

THE time is approaching for Lord Peter Walker to start walking again. He got out of Slater Walker, the Welsh Development Agency, the coal industry and the Maxwell empire in time so why not British Gas? He is a director of British Gas, and it is in a real mess.

It has committed itself to buying £40 billion worth of gas on long-term contracts over the next 10 years at an average price of 20p a therm. The going rate is now 7p a therm.

Plainly the board blundered by over-estimating the demand, particularly from the electricity industry which can't make its gas turbines work. Clare Spottiswoode, gas regulator, has given the crisis a helpful shove by declaring: "It is not obvious that British Gas's long-term financial situation is secure."

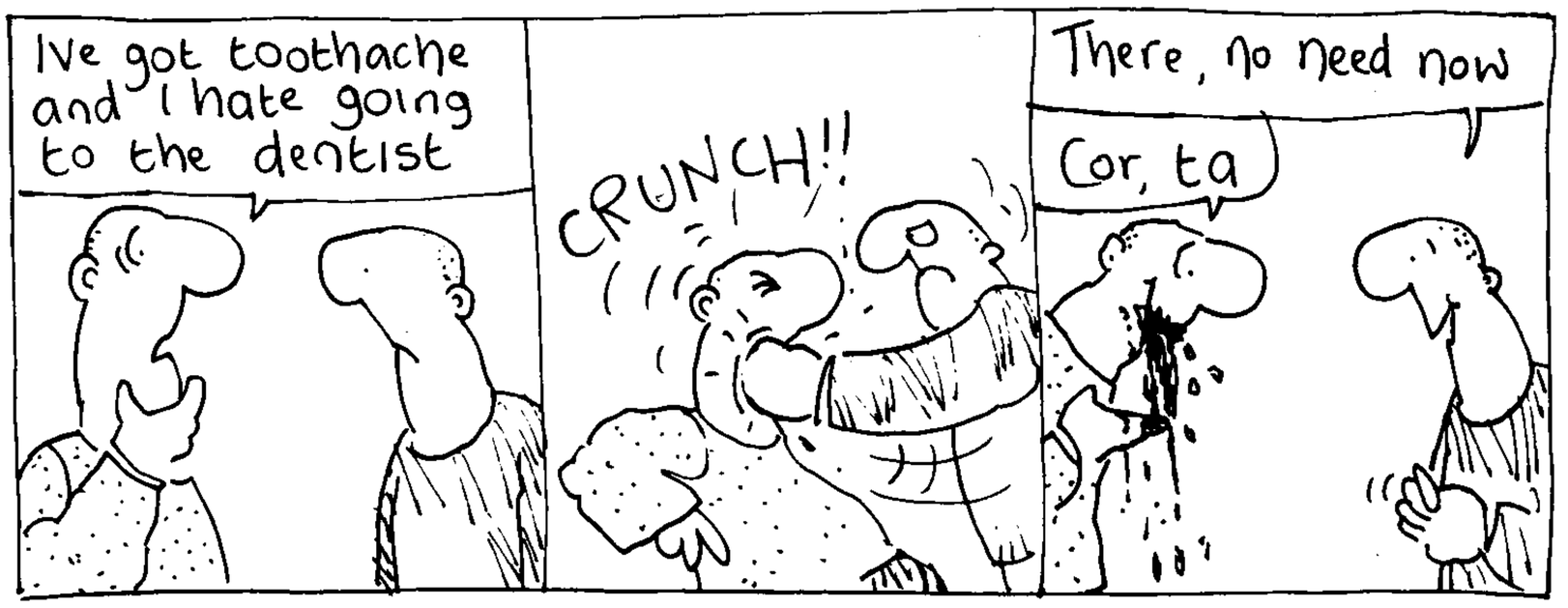
In fact British Gas is doing so well it has decided to sack lots of people.

To help them find jobs after the "extensive organisational changes", the company has gone to the expense of hiring a specialist outplacement consultancy, whose hired experts are urging employers to "Think British Gas" when recruiting and offering them £1,000 a throw to take on and retrain an ex-British Gas employee.

The latters' skills are listed to tempt potential employers; while to comfort its own staff British Gas writes that "these changes will affect all levels of employee from junior staff to senior management".

No doubt the cost of the "outplacement centre" and severance pay will go on to gas bills so shareholders can continue to enjoy substantial dividends.

HUSBAND



NOOKS and CORNERS

LOOMING above Deansgate in Manchester — once the city of great mills and warehouses — is a splendid example of industrial architecture. Above the sublime walls of brick, large white letters proudly proclaim that it is, or was, the "Great Northern Railway Company's Goods Warehouse".

It was built in 1899 and is particularly special — and rare — because it was designed to deal with three types of transport: road, rail and canal (the Salford Canal runs underneath the building and is linked by a hydraulic lift).

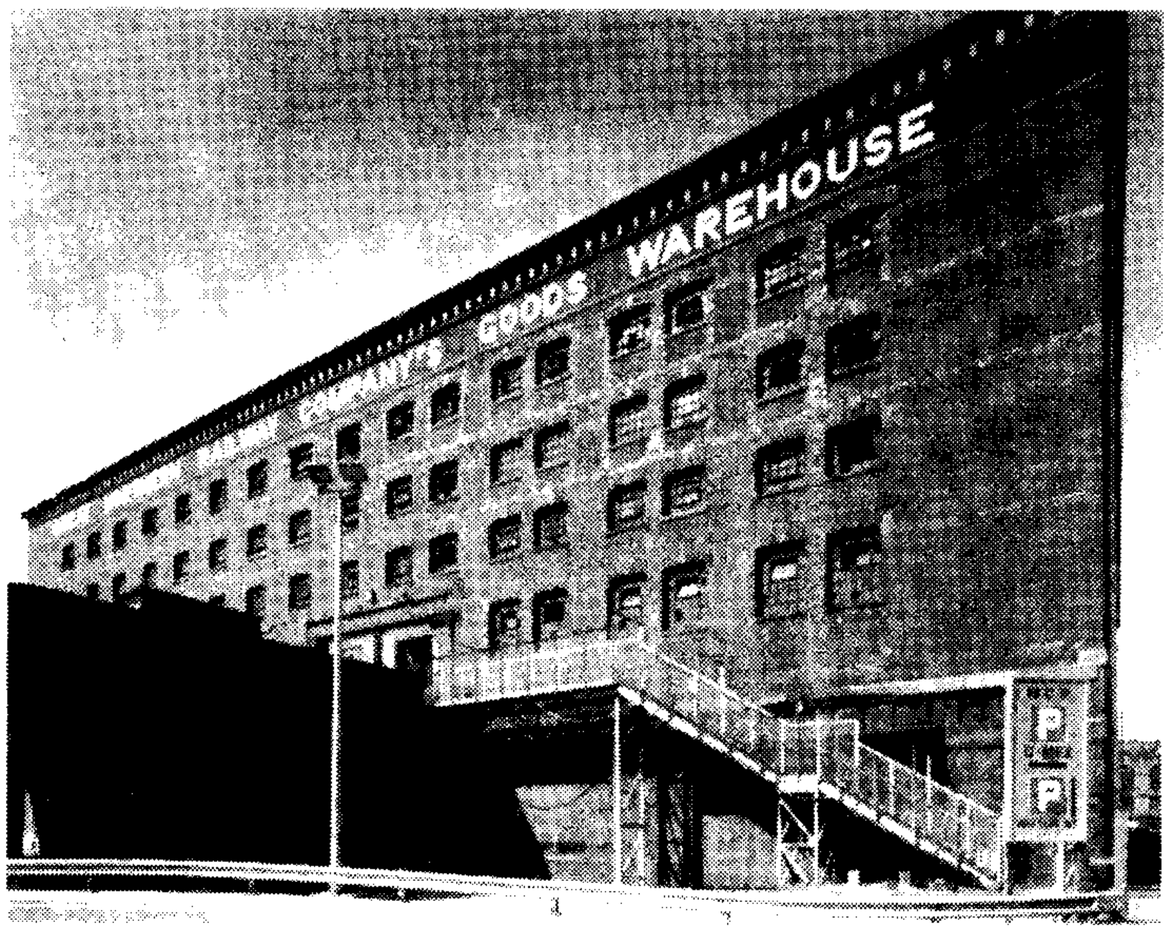
This warehouse, a great local landmark, is listed grade II and is about to be mutilated. The owners, Merlin Great Northern Ltd, supported by Manchester city council and the Central Manchester development corporation, English Partnerships and GMex, hope to develop the building and surrounding site by demolishing the (listed) carriage ramp, demolishing part of the adjacent (listed) block at 235-292 Deansgate and buildings in St Peter Street around the corner — all to create an open space — and by demolishing three-quarters of the (listed) connecting railway viaduct.

This will enable the Great Northern Warehouse to be used for shops, restaurant and car-parking and also for a 13-storey office block to be built next door on the corner of Watson Street and Windmill Street. What a boon!

The scheme runs counter to all government guidelines for listed buildings and conservation areas, and concern about what is proposed has been expressed by the Newcomen Society, the Inland Waterways Association, the Council for British Archaeology, British Waterways, the Institution of Civil Engineers, the Railway and Canal Historical Society and the Victorian Society. But those who know best in Manchester are carrying on regardless. An application has been made to the European commission for £12.1 million of "regional challenge" funding and Manchester city council has agreed to invest £7 million.

Naturally there has been no public consultation and both Central Manchester development corporation (to be dissolved next year) and Manchester city council regard securing planning permission and listed building consent as a mere formality. They should know: they grant it, after all.

But there is always English Heritage, statutory guardians of our heritage, who might take a different line. Indeed, officers within English Heritage were opposed to the development proposals and the demolition of the carriage ramp, but fortunately they have been overruled by authority at a higher level. After all, government must run smoothly and large commercial concerns must be treated with the respect they deserve. Who cares about listed buildings when you might get a large dollop of free Euromoney?



Fortunately, some Mancunian s do, and they have formed the Friends of Great Northern to oppose the proposals. Good luck to them.

NOW a readers' quiz. Who wrote the following?

"As I have encountered nothing but problems for the reconstruction of the building and even the furnishing of my own rooms, I brought in without further ado some experienced old building hands I knew... and the same night they tore out plaster and wood lining and threw it all down the ceremonial staircase. The next morning, when the worthy old bureaucrats arrived... they murmured their warning that I could end up in prison for what I have done. They haven't caught on that our revolution will not be stopped either by old men, old files, or old stucco..."

Could it be Michael Manser, or Sir Richard Rogers, or Sir Norman Foster, describing how they overcame difficulties with obstructive conservationists; or English Heritage while trying to modernise a tiresome listed building? No: in fact this is a diary entry for 1933 by that notable patron of the arts, Josef Goebbels.

He was recording the progress of conversion work carried out by his architect, Albert Speer, in a protected historic building by the great Schinkel in Berlin, as quoted in Gita Sereny's new biography of the architect. So you see there is nothing new about the problems Britain's greatest geniuses face today in dealing with inhibiting listed building legislation. Indeed, this passage rather reminds me of the bold way Sir Richard dealt with a pair of old stuccoed houses in Chelsea to make a suitable home for himself and his family. He gutted them...

'Piloti'

Pseuds Corner

I had a burger and a beer. Both were splendidly replete, in the Heideggerian formulation they were "standing into being". I have no doubt that as the "forms" were carried past the mouth of the cave in Plato's famous simile, a burger and beer from Garfunkel's were among them.

WILL SELF
Observer

Jackson's Dilemma is less the quintessence of Murdoch as a quintessence of that quintessence, a kind of gritty residue scraped from a crucible full of burnt-up allusions, habitual tics and situational givens.

D.J. TAYLOR
Guardian

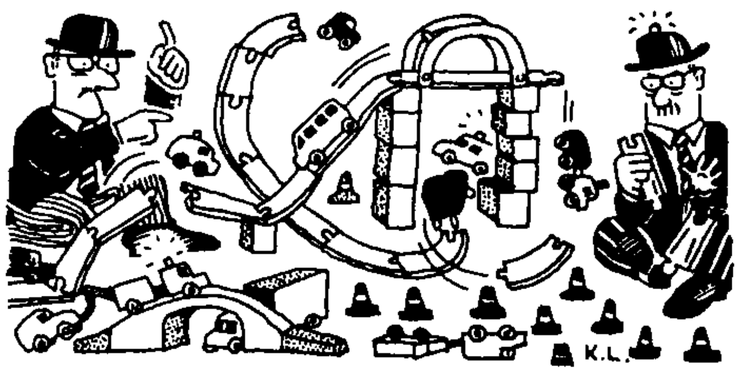
My boyfriend had asked me to marry him and I was not sure. Then, as we were making love by the log fire one night, his face, bathed in golden light, looked so beautiful I had a revelation: he wasn't just any man, he was all men, and I was all women. It was very primal. At that instant I fell in love and had the most powerful orgasm ever.

'BARBARA, 35 teacher'
Cosmopolitan

Chaired by Alan Johnson the Retail Finance break out will investigate the role of consolidated information in financial retailing, enabling increased client "wallet share" and the use of alternative new information driven channels.

Jeremy Wilkes of Price Waterhouse will elaborate the channel theme by discussing the three sided conundrum of Product-Channel-Customer and the role of integrated information making this a contemporary possibility and driver for increased business in the future.

Flyer: "Knowledge Is Power" seminar



The sequence of bridges and viaducts and the continuity of the carriageways are to be guided by a structured design approach. This shall seek to express bridges and viaducts as:

Gateways: Focal points which highlight and celebrate particular locations by intensifying and emphasising their importance, dynamic thresholds through which or over which the traveller is conscious of passing.

Connections: Vital elements linking the gateways and offering a transitional but specific experience, balancing unique elements with continuity and consistency.

Urban Intervention: Seeking integration with Streetscape and Townscape in an appropriate and complementary form, scale, texture and colour but recognising the role of contrast. This principle would be approached positively as an aid to local identity and legibility.

Icons: Conveying the image of the city, forward looking, confident, international.

Glasgow District Council's Director of Planning's report on M74 motorway extension

Still life from the quietly croaking navel of a Hooverbag left by the pickled vegetarian Buddha no-one else saw run a mock turtle soup chef through to the boneyard before turning into a lily. 1971 65 x 67. *£1100*

Catalogue from JAZZ PAINTRY — an exhibition of Bop Paintings, collages, drawings and picture-poems by MICHAEL HOROVITZ

The Last Star manifests a generosity and sympathy to its subject that is rare in any critical undertaking. Author and singer meet in a decadent union of sensibilities, a marriage in celebration of the most controversial edge of creative art. Forging a spectacular symbiosis of danger and delirium, Jeremy Reed's opulent, narcotic prose provides the ultimate complement to Marc Almond's diva histrionics and the passionate, gender-searching poetics of his nocturnal milieu.

Jacket blurb of Marc Almond: The Last Star by Jeremy Reed (Creation Books)

CONTRIBUTORS: Everyone, B. Heys, J. McIntosh, D. Wright, J. Mackechnie, APR, S. Smith.

£10 paid for entries

TV

Michael Barrymore's My Kind Of People (ITV)

FOR many years there has been a standard clause in the contracts of American TV celebrities dictating that they must maintain "uniformity of appearance" throughout a booking.

Anchorpeople are formally warned that they will be taken off air if their weight increases significantly; large-scale haircuts have to be checked with the executive producer; and newscasters with brief eye infections making it impossible to wear their contact lenses have been kept at home on full pay rather than appear in alien spectacles. It's a measure of how big a celebrity Oprah Winfrey is that networks are forced to tolerate her widely fluctuating shape.

The clause is increasingly common in British contracts — particularly since Philip Schofield came out as grey and bespectacled shortly after signing a vast deal with ITV — but the strange case of Michael Barrymore now raises the possibility of a contractual requirement for "psychological uniformity" to be maintained throughout a series.

His new ITV show, Michael Barrymore's My Kind Of People, was already partly completed at the time of his recent coming out/outing in the tabloid press. The word from LWT is that the series needed to be extensively reedited in order to match up Barrymore before and Barrymore after. He was, apparently, like two kinds of people.

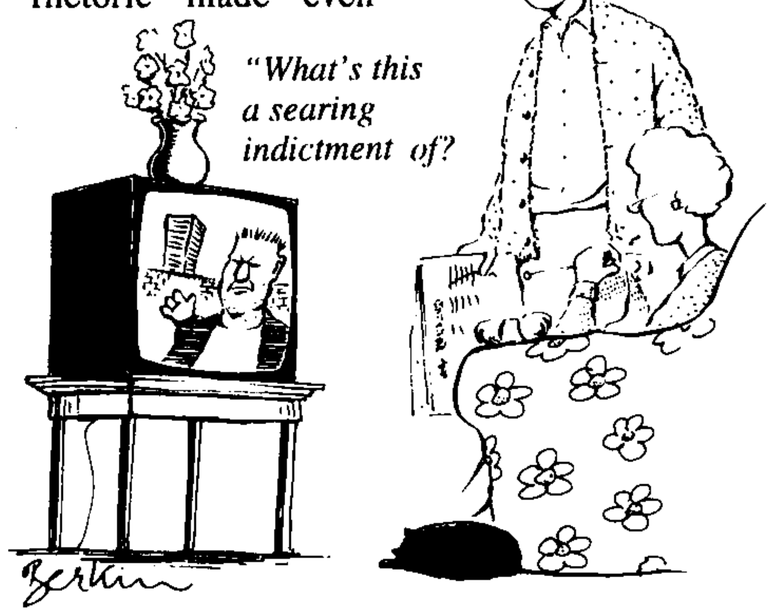
Certainly, watching *My Kind Of People*, Barrymore's first new TV appearance since his life-swerve, is like reading a letter sent by someone just before they died. The smallest details take on a terrible significance. For example, in the rather clumsy opening sequence, Barrymore was being taken to see a mysterious "lady", which turned out to be a vintage car. Was this to be taken as a rather brave little in-joke about this being the only kind of lady Mike was into? Or had the conceit just become an accident of personal history?

Even allowing for interpretations prejudiced by events, the first programme of the series — which is a talent show based around a stage constructed in the lobby of the Whitgift Shopping Centre in Croydon — could not really be taken as anything other than an organised attempt to establish Barrymore's rehabilitation with his audience. Amid the careful cutaways to delirious faces up against the crash barriers — and the huge banner reading "You're Awight, Michael" — the director deserves an award for failing to pick up in any of the shots the mass of tabloid journalists who attended each day's filming.

Barrymore's opening number was the song "Smile, though you're heart is breaking", a heavily loaded piece of luvvie rhetoric made even more significant by the fact that Michael Jackson also performed it on his recent comeback album. In the context of Barrymore's series, the song was almost literally a showstopper. The programme never recovered from the self-advertising melancholy of that moment. Just as there is a disconcerting sense of nastiness beneath the breezy surface of Jeremy Beadle's people shows, here a sense of deep personal confusion underlay almost every moment.

For example, Barrymore at one point picked up a young boy contestant and kissed him full on the lips. Is that what he would have done anyway? Or was the gesture a deliberate response to the repeated suggestion of the *Sun* newspaper, making its classic cruel confusion between pederasty and homosexuality, that Barrymore's main problem on stage in future would be his rapport with small boys? Similarly, was Barrymore's camp prancing and suggestive hip-wriggling more marked than in the past — or had it simply become complicated by his biography?

As a talent show the programme's a joke. There's no voting and most of the acts are interrupted or sabotaged by Barrymore's Morecambe & Wise-style clowning at the rear of the stage. The main problem with the programme, though, is that, while the secrets of Barrymore's private life may have been revealed, the mystery of his public life remains. What is it that he has a talent for?



Those who make a serious case for Barrymore as a performer speak of the "constant sense of danger" that underlies everything he does. It's true that it's there, and present even in a show as tacky as *My Kind Of People*, but the danger comes, it is increasingly clear, from the risk of total emotional implosion.

'Square Eyes'

MEDIA NEWS

THERE was no mention on BBC news bulletins on Friday 27 October of the amazing story of the hour: the Canadian hoax on the queen.

The *Times* the next day quoted a BBC spokesman who said the story was not considered to have sufficient news value. This puzzled BBC hacks, who recalled that it led that night's *News at Ten* and led most of the papers (and BBC news bulletins) the next day.

The only relevant fact the disconcerted hacks could come up with is that the chairman of the BBC governors, Marmaduke Hussey, is married to a lady-in-waiting to the queen.

FURTHER proof of prevailing left-wing influence at the BBC is the appointment on 18 October of Adrian White CBE as a BBC governor.

As chairman of Biwater in the 1980s Mr White was one of Lady Thatcher's favourite businessmen, accompanying her on many trips to "bat for Britain", especially in the Far East. In the course of these visits, Biwater (which made handsome contributions to the Conservative party) won many valuable contracts.

Suitable subjects for future investigations by BBC newshawks are as follows:

1 The involvement of Biwater in the notorious Pergau dam project, and how much the project and the company were assisted by aid from the British taxpayer.

2 The involvement of Biwater in the Green E-Sarn forestry, irrigation and hydro-electric power programme in Thailand, and how much the project and the company were assisted by aid from the British taxpayer.

3 The beneficiaries of the government's Aid and Trade Provision (ATP), and the influence over ATP of the government-appointed quango, the Overseas Projects Board. (A board member who might help is Adrian White CBE).

4 The government loans for a 1984 £130 million water supply contract in Nigeria; the involvement of Biwater; the report of a Nigerian judicial inquiry that a payment of £15 million had been made to Biwater by the Nigerian state water company; and the subsequent exoneration of Biwater by the Nigerian government.

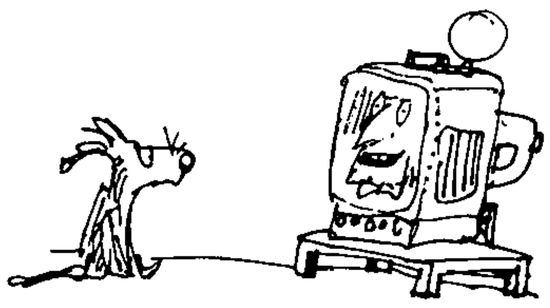
5 The unexpected and, for Biwater executives, distressing resignation of Mr White from the chairmanship and the board of Biwater last year. In an announcement in March, Mr White said he was "standing down... in order to concentrate fully on the Pacific rim area." He would, he said, "be based in the Far East".

6 His resignation at the same time (and for the same reason) as chairman of another quango, the Epsom Health Care Trust.

7 His prompt return to the chair of Biwater. According to the BBC press release he is "chairman of Biwater".

An appropriate investigator of these matters would be celebrated BBC journalist John Humphreys, who knows Biwater well from the several PR films he has made for the benefit of the company staff.

JIM DAVIDSON'S
DEGENERATION GAME
YES, HE'S THE IDEAL CHOICE TO UNITE THE GENERATIONS...
FOR NO MATTER WHETHER THEY BE TEENAGER, MUM & DAD OR GRANDPARENT...
THEY ALL FEEL THE SAME ABOUT HIM!
Ken Pyne



SINCE 5 October when ITV first raised awkward questions about G-Tech, the American company that owns a fifth of Camelot, the national lottery promoter, lottery enthusiasts have been looking forward to BBC *Panorama*'s more detailed investigation into this touchy subject.

The programme has been a long time coming. First it was expected on 16 October, but nothing appeared. Then it was expected on 30 October — but again no show.

The problem was Lowe Bell, the energetic PR firm run by Sir Tim Bell, formerly Lady Thatcher's favourite PR man. As soon as *Panorama* hacks started asking awkward questions about G-Tech, concerned lawyers flew in from the United States. They went into long and anxious discussions with Sir Tim about the impending programme, and Lowe Bell representatives duly harassed the programme makers, demanding meetings at which the allegations against G-Tech could be fully discussed.

It seems the PR men may not have succeeded in pulling the programme altogether. The current favourite broadcast date is 13 November. This could be seen as a bit of a failure for Sir Tim — or it could be seen as a success. Another prestigious client of the ubiquitous Tinkerbell is the BBC.

Grover is arrested, for dealing in 'E's

CUTBACKS at L!VE TV, the joke cable channel run by the Mirror Group's David "Rommel" Montgomery and Kelvin Mackenzie, are having embarrassing consequences — especially the decision to ban staff from using taxis.

A cameraman on his way to film *Morning Call*, the breakfast show, got stuck on the tube and arrived at the studios a quarter of an hour after the show had started. The panicking director had set up the camera himself and ordered a cleaner to keep it pointed at the presenters.

Similar "multi-skilling" is evident at management level where Mackenzie is thinking up programme ideas. One of them, the innovative *Topless Darts* (see *Eye* 882), has now been piloted. But the sight of four topless women, each paid £100 to cavort round a darts board, has been so, er, successful that the programme is now being radically rethought.

ANOTHER triumph for the vigilant sleuths of Radio 4's consumer watchdog, *You and Yours*.

"Beware people who want to make you a millionaire!" was the headline at the start of the show on 20 October, warning of a scheme run from abroad to win money on the giant Spanish lottery, El Gordo. "The promotion details say 'we will place your money in a bank in Escrow in Spain'," the programme reported. "Well, we've searched a gazetteer and we can't find the town of Escrow anywhere."

Er, no. Escrow is not a collection of haciendas, as anyone with an elementary knowledge of finance could have told *You and Yours*. It is a type of bank account.

HACKWATCH: NIGELLA LAWSON and JOHN DIAMOND

"THE columnist as self-publicist is not an attractive spectacle," *Times* columnist Nigella Lawson announced last April. And it is true that she doesn't always write about herself. Sometimes she writes about her husband, *Times* columnist John Diamond; sometimes about her baby daughter, Cosima. What does this leave John to write about in *his* column? Why, Nigella and Cosima.

Seldom have newspaper readers been treated to such a ceaseless torrent of domestic detail. But to judge by the Lawson-Diamond output over the past few months, the strains are beginning to show…

11 April: A photo of John, Nigella and Cosima appears on the top of the *Times*'s front page, plugging a feature by Nigella on "Why women keep putting off having babies". Since having a baby, she reveals, she has made an amazing discovery: that it is "difficult" to combine motherhood with a career.

18 April: Nigella lets readers into a secret: she does much of her shopping by phone — "because if you work and have a baby, the time you're not working you want to be with the baby… Of course, extravagance shocks the hard-up, but by my reckoning I actually spend far less phoning for what I need. For one thing, Nappy Express… doesn't charge for delivery."

22 April: Time for John to get in on the act. Cosima was "born in the local maternity home, which happens to be Queen Charlotte's Hospital, which in turn happens to be the progenitor of the Queen Charlotte's Ball". To publicise the ball, he and Nigella have agreed to be photographed — with "our baby".

9 May: Taking a break from baby-talk, Nigella reminisces about her own youth. "When I was 15 I regarded it as immensely flattering to be taken for a 23-year-old." But now, she complains, "the young no longer want to grow up".

20 May: John boasts that Cosima has been kept well away from sugar and artificial sweeteners. "Where does it leave me? With a baby who's never been sick, who eats everything that's put in front of her, who sleeps from 7.30pm to 8am and wakes giggling…" He admits that he is in danger of becoming "insufferably smug".

20 June: "Before I had a child," Nigella discloses, "I felt very differently about adoption. I felt that if I'd found out I couldn't have children of my own, I wouldn't want to adopt them." But she's changed her mind: now, she thinks the important thing is that "babies are loved and looked after". Fancy!

24 June: Over to you, John. "We were having that very-funny-I-don't-think semi-joke that fathers of daughters who have just learned to distinguish their ego from their id have. The one about how, as soon as she hits puberty, we send her to finishing school with a closed order of nuns." Still, as he admits, he doesn't have to worry about it yet, since "my daughter is only 18 months old".

11 July: Husbands! Aren'tcha sick of them? "Men seem to want, at some level, to find a woman who'll mother them," Nigella observes. "That's to say, making his life more comfortable, but also defusing his violent tendencies. Men want women to protect them from life."

22 July: John, too, has been brooding about the differences between the sexes. "Put two women in a bedroom and tell them the last train left an hour ago and neither will reach for a coin to toss to see who gets the sofa. They just get into bed together." Why, John wonders, doesn't he do that with men? He asks Nigella, who suggests that he has "a fear of intimacy".

25 July: Ominously Nigella decides to write about divorce. "The amount of mutual vilification between couples as blame is ascribed, grievances aired and bad blood let in the course of a separation is, at the very least, unhelpful," she notes. "Neither tax incentives nor divorce reform will make people stay married against their will."

12 August:. "Washing up last night," Nigella writes, "I found I could not put the stuff away afterwards. This wasn't laziness, as all male readers will recognise, but a desire to make apparent the labour I'd undertaken. This is normal behaviour for men, who expect to be applauded for domestic undertakings."

15 August: "Bringing up children," Nigella laments, not for the first time, "is exhausting."

2 September: Taking a cab home, John finds himself shouting abuse at a careless driver. "My wife looked at me accusingly," he confesses. "So did the baby."

12 September: Although Nigella has put her baby's name down for a local nursery school, she doesn't share Gillian Shephard's belief that these institutions should offer moral guidance. "Mostly this example must come from home: for babies and small children, parents show how the world is and how to behave in it. The chances are that a parent who says please and thank you will have a child who says please and thank you." Not content with this brilliant insight, she offers us another: "A child is a person in his or her own right, and deserves to be thus respected."

26 September: "When I was 15 there was nothing that pleased me more than to be taken for 28," Nigella writes, apparently forgetting that she made this point back in May. "Marriage, cohabitation, sexual behaviour: none of this makes any difference; the only significant change seems to come from having children."

3 October: Nigella can't see the point of child benefit. "Why should I be compensated by the state for having a child?" Especially when Rupert Murdoch already rewards her so handsomely.

7 October: John has taken his baby into the local bookmaker's. "Cosima watched it with me on the TV set in the shop, she going 'Horsey! Horsey!' and the rest of the clientele, hardly more intelligibly, screaming the name of the horse she'd picked. The horse came third from last." Cute, eh?

17 October: Nigella is writing about divorce once again. "The fear that children have of divorce seems entirely in pace with the probability of their being a victim of it. Thus, it is a reasonable fear." What is she trying to tell us?

21 October: "I hesitate to trouble you with the more drearily intimate details of my domestic life," John writes, before going on to do just that. He is furious to discover that Nigella has washed his jeans without removing several cheques from the pockets. Still, the anger eventually subsides and domestic bliss is restored. Or is it? On the same day, the *Times*'s Weekend section carries a two-page cover story by Nigella Lawson on the uselessness of the modern father — and, specifically, of J. Diamond.

"Breast-feeding gave the perfect first excuse to my husband," she grumbles. "He couldn't do much, he'd say ruefully… Then he would cheerfully whistle up to his study and tinker with the computer for hours, while I sat up with a baby that needed winding and holding. He'd be professionally waxing lyrical on the delights of new fatherdom, so deep that even the broken nights couldn't detract from them. Meanwhile, he was either sleeping with earplugs, lying next to me and the baby utterly oblivious to her stirrings or crying, or on the sofa in his study."

28 October: Making up for lost time, John agrees to baby-mind for the weekend while Nigella is away. By the end of Saturday he is already exhausted — "and so I phoned up the nanny and gave her time-and-a-half to come in on a Sunday."

How does little Cosima feel about being used as column-fodder? We do not know since she doesn't yet have a *Times* column of her own. Still, given the Thunderer's fondness for employing the offspring of famous hacks — Giles "Son of Alan" Coren, Daniel "Son of Loonybins" Johnson — it can only be a matter of time.

DOING THE ROUNDS

The Bitter Pill

"I AM acutely aware that this new information will worry women, and impose a substantial burden on doctors and pharmacists."

So said Professor M.D. Rawlins, chairman of the government's committee on the safety of medicines (CSM), in his letter telling every GP in the UK that seven of the most popular oral contraceptives should be abandoned for women with risk factors for venous thrombo-embolism such as obesity, varicose veins or a previous history of thrombosis of any cause.

"Other women," concluded Prof Rawlins, "should continue to take them only if they are intolerant of other oral contraceptives and prepared to accept the increased risk of thrombo-embolism."

Unfortunately this information reached M.D. 24 hours after it hit the press — and not in time to reassure a surgery full of women, most of whom had no notion of the absolute and relative risk. The overall odds of a non-smoking under 35-year-old woman dying as a result of taking the pill are 1 in 77,000. For a pill-taking smoker under the age of 35, the odds are 1 in 10,000. The non-smoker is 13 times more likely to die while driving a car, six times more likely to die as a result of pregnancy and two and a half times as likely to die in a household accident than from taking the pill. Two themes emerge: death on the pill is rare; and if you want to reduce your risk, stopping smoking is far more important than which pill you take.

As for the risk of vein clots, these in themselves are inconvenient but only dangerous if the clot breaks off and bungs up the lungs. Venous thrombosis occurs in 1 in 10,000 non-pill takers every year. Pill takers were thought to have a 2 in 10,000 risk, but Prof Rawlins seems to be suggesting that those taking the magnificent seven may have a 3 in 10,000 risk. As 70 percent of the women in M.D.'s practice are on these "harmful" contraceptives, I wanted more evidence than a flimsy circular from the CSM before embarking on the wholesale disruption of patients' family planning.

This would not seem to be an unreasonable request, particular since the government constantly exhorts the value of evidence-based medicine, a founding principle of which is that grassroots doctors should not accept the simplistic rantings of detached academics, which may be politically or financially biased, but evaluate the evidence first hand from the original scientific papers.

This is even more important when an author of one of the papers, Prof Walter Spitzer, strongly disagrees with the CSM's interpretation. Earlier this year the government tried to blacklist these newer contraceptives on financial grounds, so I was naturally anxious that this might be part of the hidden agenda. Fortunately, Prof Rawlins' letter ended: "If you require any further information, please contact the Medicines Control Agency (part of the CSM) on 0171-273 0000."

When I asked the CSM if I could be sent copies of the three unpublished papers on which the advice is based, I was told: "You are not allowed to see the evidence." When I pointed out that this was for my personal analysis of the validity and reliability of the studies in question, the phone went dead. I can only assume that the government has a vested interest in protecting these studies from the independent analysis of those who have to prescribe the drugs and deal with the epidemic of anxiety. At present all I have is 200 worried women and two Sainsbury's bags full of returned Marvelon and Femodene. Any offers?

● JOHN SPIERS has launched himself into his new role as chairman of the Patients Association (see last *Eye*) by appearing as *Dr* John Spiers on the agenda for the 7 November agm. So as not to confuse any members, Dr John will doubtless stress in his acceptance speech that his doctorate is an honorary one from Sussex University for services to the Alumni Association. His contribution to medical science is equal to that of two other famous Sussex doctors: Dr Paul McCartney and Dr Virginia Wade.

● **HILLINGDON hospital trust** is up the creek after unacceptably renovating The Furze, a grade two listed building in the hospital grounds, without planning permission. The beautiful building, which would have been ideal for recuperating patients, was being converted into offices for personnel and finance staff when the national heritage department stepped in. An NH spokesman said: "What they did was pretty grim."

"Penny for Guy's?"

● **NORTH Derbyshire health authority's** annual report makes interesting reading. "In this age of medical advances — of multi-transplants and heart bypasses by keyhole surgery — North Derbyshire Health has demonstrated another way that health services can be improved. By using our ears." Whoever wrote this crap didn't use his or her ears to listen to a cardiac surgeon, who might have pointed out the technical difficulties of performing a heart bypass through a keyhole incision.

● **CITY Hospitals Sunderland** has advertised for a "Trust Wide Bed Manager" to "monitor, manage and predict bed usage, and to ensure that patients are matched to the right environment to suit their needs". The 37.5 hour job brings in up to £21,650 a year. Interested? Phone the Temporary Bed Manager on 0191 565 6256 (bleep 51044).

M.D.

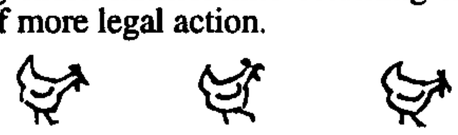
DOWN ON THE FARM

ON its new white paper on rural England, the government pledges a "continuing commitment" to the preservation of the distinctive qualities of a "living and working countryside". "Of course", it says, governments need to approach such an enterprise with "humility".

Examples of this "commitment" are not hard to find. West Country farmers, for example, have recently been locked in a long battle over payment of grants for renovating "environmentally friendly" hedgerows and banks.

Farmers who used contractors to help with this work not unreasonably added the costs of their own labour when claiming the grants. Not legal, said the Maffia, taking 19 farmers to court and prosecuting them for alleged criminal fraud.

The cases failed when the farmers proved that they had done the work and the court ruled that everything was open and above board. But this was not good enough for the Maffia. Ignoring a minor matter like a court ruling, it has shown its "continuing commitment" to the living and *working* countryside by deducting the money from other grants. It is now bullying more farmers into returning money under threat of more legal action.



SHOWING the same "humility" the Maffia last week proposed yet more regulations for slaughterhouses. These, it claimed, were non-controversial as the measures were "already familiar to the meat industry".

Buried deep within the consultative document is an entirely new and bizarre proposal that any pig slaughterhouses with "bends" in the slaughterline must have a five-metre gap between "clean" and "dirty" processes.

The explanation for this startling innovation goes back to last summer when Maffia officials claimed in front of a meat tribunal that it already was law — a cunning way to force Bacup pig slaughterer Jim Law to close down his business (*Eyes passim*). Law's tiny slaughterhouse was only 4.75 metres long. But the tribunal ruled that the Maffia officials were asking for something which simply wasn't legal.

Nothing will deter these people, however. Having been caught out pretending that something was law when it wasn't, they are now trying to introduce a new law just to get their own way. And if there is any attempt to argue against the proposals, the Maffia claims there are "no alternative approaches possible" as "the regulations must reflect the requirements of EC directive 91/497/EEC".

Interestingly there is absolutely no requirement for this new law in the original directive. So far from there being "no alternative" the Maffia is probably acting unlawfully by adding to the directive.

ONE of many ways to ensure a "living and working countryside" is to ensure the survival of a healthy number of mixed farms, preferably run organically without chemicals.

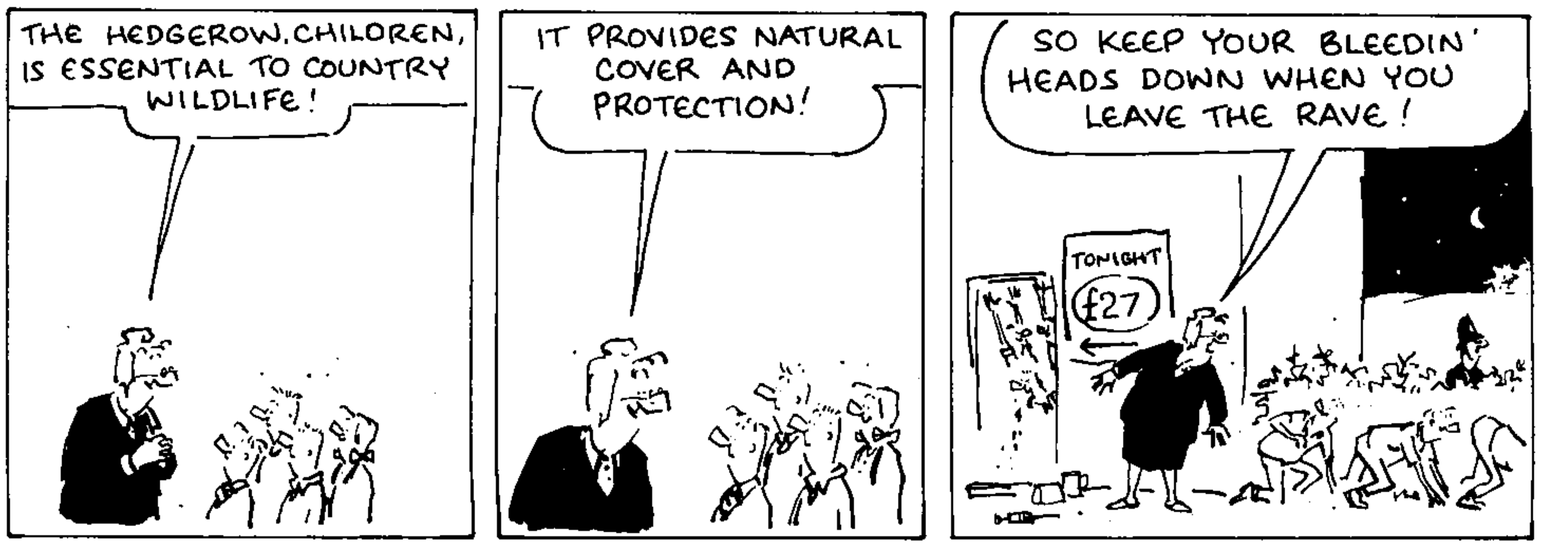
A recent study funded by the Maffia shows that organic farms like Prince Charles's at Highgrove support much higher populations of birds. This confirms earlier work (*Eye* 881) showing this type of farming to be an essential part of the countryside.

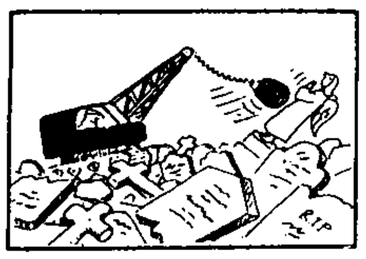
This must be why the Maffia provides least support to the organic movement, while the CAP subsidy it administers encourages the monoculture of the "barley barons" and separate intensive livestock herds.

'New Muckspreader'

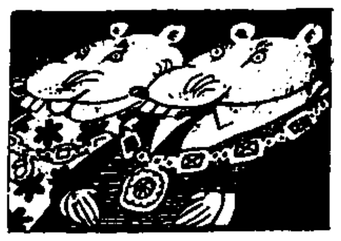
Old Macdonald

ALBERT


THE HEDGEROW, CHILDREN, IS ESSENTIAL TO COUNTRY WILDLIFE!
IT PROVIDES NATURAL COVER AND PROTECTION!
SO KEEP YOUR BLEEDIN' HEADS DOWN WHEN YOU LEAVE THE RAVE!
TONIGHT
£27



THE Rotten Borough Advertiser



ON YOUR MARKS, GET SET, LOSE MONEY . . .

WHAT can Manchester citizens expect when the city hosts the 2002 Commonwealth Games? Los Angeles Olympics-style profits — or a Sheffield World Student Games-style cock-up? Consider the facts:

● No other city has bid for the Commonwealth event — just as no one else bid for the 1991 student games that cost Sheffield £15 million and nearly as much again in interest. Manchester is only involved as a sop to Sir Bob Scott, the theatre impresario who ran its two recent failed olympics bids.

● While Manchester has naively budgeted to break even, council leader Graham Stringer believes the city "might even make a surplus". No city has ever made a profit from Commonwealth games. The last time they were held in Britain, in Edinburgh in 1986, they were bailed out by Robert Maxwell. Stringer is so confident of success he has drawn up a secret contingency report to deal with the inevitable losses. These will be made good by Manchester council taxpayers.

● The city's track record for building new sport facilities does not augur well. After inviting the world's top architects to compete for the right to build a new "Wembley of the North", Sir Richard Rogers and Kenzo Tange pulled out, accusing Manchester of being out of its depth. Manchester's one new sports stadium, the £9 million 3,500-seater cycling velodrome, has a leaking roof. Organisers recently had to cancel the Superdrome event because only 150 tickets had been sold.

● Manchester's abilities do not match its ambition. The 1994 Global Forum, meant as a follow-up to the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, collapsed in financial disarray through lack of sponsorship after two chief executives quit in less than a year. Manchester had told the world that 50,000 delegates, including Bill Clinton, would be coming. In the end there was a party and a couple of lectures. Plans to hold the world chess championships also fell through at the last minute.

● Manchester will have nowhere for fussy VIPs to kip. Kuala Lumpar, which hosts the 1998 event, is building 11 five-star hotels. Manchester has none and is not planning any.

● The city is spending £5,000 to send one of its chief library officers, Lis (sic) Phelan, to Bermuda, where Commonwealth Games officials will soon ratify Manchester's bid. Phelan has been seconded by the chief executive's department to oversee preparations for the games. Back home, where she is in charge of the libraries' multi-million pound budget, she recently forgot to include in her figures the upgrading of scale 1 workers' pay after a wage rise. The money was eventually paid — but not before recruitment was frozen and new book purchases were massively reduced. Tally ho!

RED FACE OF THE WEEK

DNA testing of a piece of human shit may identify who stole microchips and PCs from Lambeth's housing HQ over a weekend. An inside job is suspected because housing director Jane Pannell opened her office door on the Monday to find a piece of shit had been left behind for her. A thief or thieves foiled the 24-hour security guards, alarm system and video cameras, the latter being repositioned to record uninterrupted views of the ceiling.

THE PRESTON CONNECTION

MORE heads have rolled in Preston where Operation Angel, the investigation into 30 cases of corrupt property deals involving the Labour council and local firms, continues.

Paul Smith, Preston's former deputy development director, and Keith Brockley, a local businessman, have both been found guilty of corruption at Liverpool crown court in a case Judge Denis Clark described as "scandalous".

Smith allowed Brockley to buy him two suits, four shirts and four ties in return for helping Brockley's firm win three redevelopment contracts from Preston council, for which Smith was at the time working. Two months after he left the council he secured a job with... Brockley's company!

So far 12 people have been convicted of corruption thanks to Operation Angel. But will further details of municipal wrongdoing be uncovered? Not for a while. Council chief executive Geoff Driver, brought in to clean up Preston, has been forced by council leader Valerie Wise to take an "extended holiday" for reasons undisclosed (see last issue), just when he had started piecing together a fat file of evidence for Inspector Knacker.

SHEFFIELD BY NIGHT

ON THE day that former Sheffield council leader David Blunkett solemnly addressed the Labour party conference on the virtues of education, his old comrades on the council decided that six local branch libraries should close.

To compensate for this cultural and educational loss, however, they did produce a free glossy guide to nightlife in Sheffield, charmingly called *The Dirty Stop Out's Guide*.

This is part of the council's strategy to turn the area into the Las Vegas of the north: a jumping, 24-hour city. The idea was endorsed by the over-excitable Labour MP Mo Mowlam and was said to be gaining momentum when *one* delicatessen announced that it was staying open all night.

Meanwhile former councillor Helen Jackson, now MP for the area, hailed as a victory the ruling that a local working men's club had to discontinue its policy of apartheid and allow women to join. She was subsequently seen opening a new cultural club in Sheffield... for women only.

Unison has asked its 860 000 manual and white local government members to submit views on the 1996 pay claim by 24 November.

Surveyor Magazine

IN BRIEF

LEEDS: Belle Isle Community Enterprise Ltd (Bicel), set up six years ago with the help of the city council, received more than £500,000 in local, national and Euro subsidy with which to help the unemployed start and run their own businesses. Bicel has just gone into liquidation.

HARROGATE: Liberal Democrat "boy wonder" Andrew Williams has been sacked as the council's housing chair after making an abusive phone call to Tory councillor Stephen Moorhouse, whom he called an "arsehole". Williams, who says he is 25 but looks 15, so embarrassed the ruling Lib Dems that they loyally dumped him.

BIRMINGHAM: Luckily for council leader Theresa Stewart, car commuters are completely ignoring the very detailed map put out by the city's transport department explaining diversions and roadworks on the Pershore Road. Stewart's home, Selly Wick Road, is clearly marked for diverted traffic but the chronic queues are actually winding down the next road, Upland Road. Funny that.

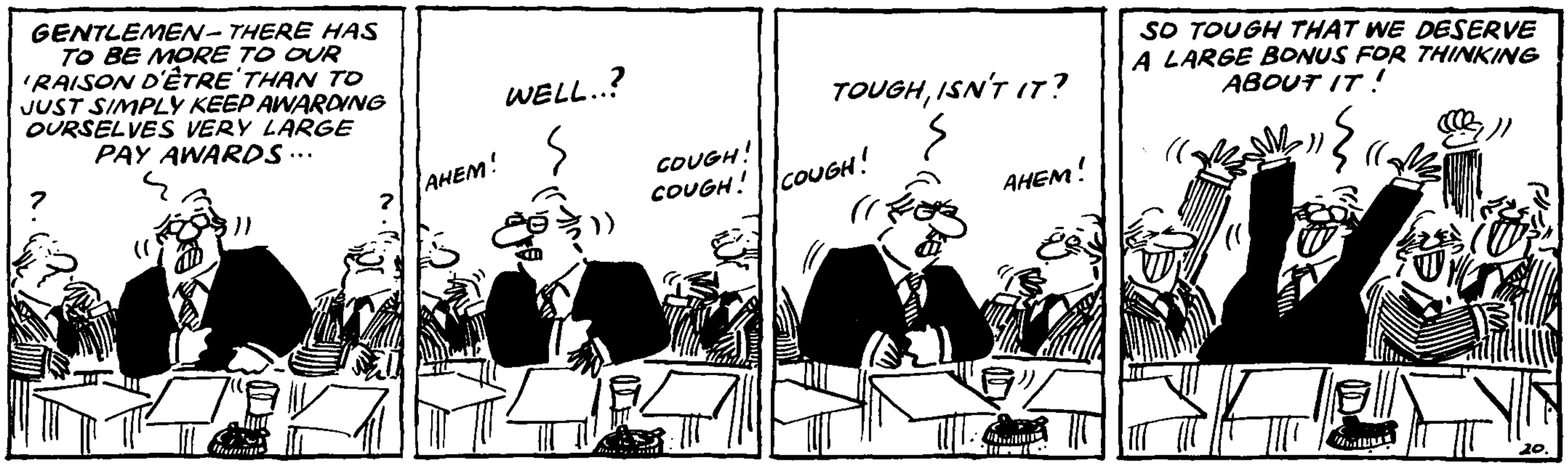
BARNSLEY: The Labour council has lost £75,000 since beating off private firms to win a cable-laying contract. Despite promising a profit, the council forgot to budget for start-up costs and miscalculated the cost of materials.

SITS. VAC.

HAPPY times for some in Cleveland, where the county is being split into four unitary boroughs whose former officials are scrabbling to board the quango gravy train. Middlesbrough's chief executive John Foster, for example, got £300,000 early retirement when his post was about to disappear. He took the public cash on a Friday — and on the Monday started as boss of Teesside's Training and Enterprise Council. *Very* enterprising.

THE DIRECTORS

DREDGE


GENTLEMEN – THERE HAS TO BE MORE TO OUR 'RAISON D'ÊTRE' THAN TO JUST SIMPLY KEEP AWARDING OURSELVES VERY LARGE PAY AWARDS ...
?
?
WELL..?
AHEM!
COUGH! COUGH!
TOUGH, ISN'T IT?
COUGH!
AHEM!
SO TOUGH THAT WE DESERVE A LARGE BONUS FOR THINKING ABOUT IT!
20.

Letters

Letter of the week

Gnome,

You've tried for years and now you've succeeded... in plumbing the depths of bad taste and gutter journalism.

Your distasteful parody on the religious Service of Thanksgiving for the life of Gordon White... a service enjoyed by 500 of his friends and admirers... shocked me when I thought I was PE *shockproof. What a piece of depravity. You cause enough distress to the living. Leave the dead in peace.*

JAMES HANSON,
London SW1.

The low downdes

Sir,

I write with reference to the account of the Gnome Memorial Service in EYE *883, which I managed to purchase today after scraping out my dole-slimmed purse. I enjoy your magazine, and have even recently met a very nice gentleman through its small ads, but I must take issue with you regarding your spelling.*

Please would you note that Mr Victor Lowndes (with a "d") (my cousin) is a very respectable and successful New Zealand businessman, has no connection whatsoever with any form of pornography, and would be highly irritated to be mistaken for Mr Victor Lownes (no "d"), who is no known relation to ourselves and seems to be involved in various pursuits which my family (the large tribe of Lowndeses with a "d") would not dream of following. We tend more towards the legal world. Indeed, one of Mr Victor Lowndes' sons runs his own law firm in Auckland, which although on the other side of the world has EYE *readers who might be seriously confused by your spelling slip.*

Will this confusion be set right? I think we should be told. In the next possible issue.

Yours faithfully,
NGAIRE M. LOWNDES (with a "d"),
Carshalton, Surrey.

Rock hard evidence

Sir,

*I refer to your Hackwatch: Rock Bottom Revisited (*EYE *882) and specifically to your mention of Andrew Neil's article in the* SUNDAY TIMES, *"No cause for shame over those deaths on the Rock" (1 October) and his special abuse of Thames TV's* DEATH ON THE ROCK.

I must point out that at no time was I requested by the makers of the documentary to decide whether the terrorists were surrendering. However, it is true that, at one point in that documentary, the presenter Julian Manyon stated that none of the witnesses he had interviewed had heard any challenge being given by the SAS to the terrorists before they opened fire. I watched an unedited version of the documentary with a then member of the SUNDAY TIMES *Insight team, Miss Rosie Waterhouse, who requested my comments on it, prior to broadcast, and, indeed, the only criticism I made was in relation to that statement. I explained to her that, with reference to the shooting of Farrell and McCann outside the Shell station in Winston Churchill Avenue, I was too far away and there was too much background noise from traffic for me to have heard any challenge if any had been given. This fact was immediately reported by Miss Waterhouse by telephone to the editorial offices of the* SUNDAY TIMES *from my house in Spain, but it was not referred to in a major article on the documentary which was published in the* SUNDAY TIMES *the next day.*

So far as I am aware and contrary to what Mr Neil says, none of my evidence to the inquest was discredited, although I do have my suspicions as to who may have sought to discredit it elsewhere! In any event, I am surprised that Mr Neil does not remember any of this. Perhaps his memory is failing!

Yours faithfully,
STEPHEN BULLOCK,
Gibraltar.

Timor consuming

Sir,

*I would like to correct one error in your otherwise excellent Footnotes story "Timorese Beasties" (*EYE *883). You state that no country has recognised Indonesia's illegal occupation of East Timor. In fact, there is one government which has enthusiastically embraced the invasion of East Timor by the Indonesian military dictatorship. It is the Australian Labor Government of Paul "Napoleon" Keating.*

So eager is the Keating government to appease the Indonesian military that it is even now engaged in duplicitous behaviour to try to deny refugee status to 18 East Timorese survivors of the massacre at Dili.

Yours,
GEOFF FRANCIS,
Petersham, New South Wales.

Position of authority

Sir,

Leafing through my illustrated KAMA SUTRA *recently I was distressed to find that my children had ripped out the last page. I think it portrays the "rush-hour" position and I'm led to believe your organ has a photo of just such a couple in the early stages of this advanced manoeuvre. I would appreciate seeing the excited young pair again.*

With my vest wishes,
PHIL LAWRANCE,
Lowestoft.

Dozy git!

Sir,

*Perchance To Dream Part 43. OK, since the Marquesa and I are clearly destined to have a meaningful relationship, let's sort this one out too. Last month (new readers start here) she had me asleep in a theatre on a night when I was neither asleep nor in that or any other theatre, as you were kind enough to let me point out (*EYE *882).*

This month she and one of your other correspondents have me apparently snoozing while supposed to be reviewing THREE TALL WOMEN *and* PEER GYNT. *The trouble this time is that I wasn't: supposed to be reviewing, I mean. Since I'd already written extensively about both shows on their first outings last year, I was merely noting their transfers, and recalling my original reviews. This I could have done had I been deeply asleep throughout (which I wasn't), or indeed merely on the pavement examining the posters.*

But since I have now exhausted my stock of Bernard Shaw quotations on the subject of sleep as a form of criticism, could we lay this one to rest? As the Marquesa is ever-eager to note, I need all I can get.

SHERIDAN MORLEY,
London SW10.

Lookalike

Brand

Murdoch

Sir,

Has anyone else noticed the striking resemblance between the comediennes Jo Brand and Dame Iris Murdoch? Are they related? I think we should be told.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTOPHER HEATH,
Weymouth, Dorset.

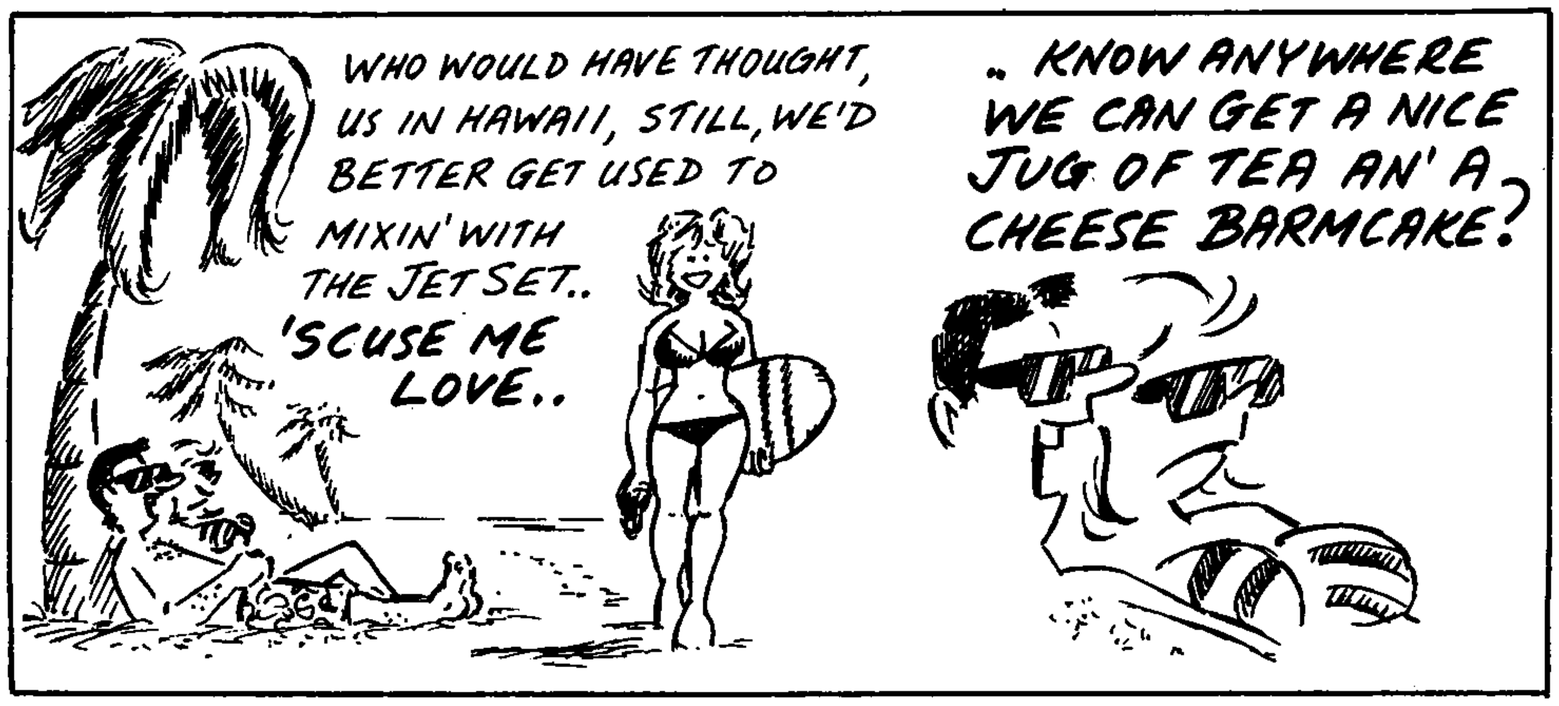
Complete turn-off

Sir,

*Square Eyes writes (*EYE *883) "The Bill's opening credits still show two pairs of Plod feet on the beat". Wrong: that's the* **closing** *credits. Later he regrets that "it has never adequately replaced DCI Ellison". Who he? There used to be a DI (not DCI) played by an actor called Ellison. Can he be who Square Eyes was thinking of? Might your TV coverage be improved by critics who actually occasionally watch the progs they pontificate so confidently about?*

Yours, round-eyed,
MICHAEL GROSVENOR MYER,
Cambridge.

The Lottery Winners TURNER


WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT, US IN HAWAII, STILL, WE'D BETTER GET USED TO MIXIN' WITH THE JET SET..
'SCUSE ME LOVE..
.. KNOW ANYWHERE WE CAN GET A NICE JUG OF TEA AN' A CHEESE BARMCAKE?

I-SPY

£10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Painful decision

Sir,

Re: Paracetamol — A Suitable Case for Treatment? Having read Footnotes (EYE 883), I would like to support Professor Maclean's assertion that Co-methianol is a safer preparation than paracetamol alone when taken in excess. However I should point out that methionine should not be given to patients who have already some established form of hepatic insufficiency.

Furthermore I would like to point out that many cases of paracetamol overdose result from unwitting co-administration of different proprietary products containing paracetamol. Of the five products pictured in the article, three are classed as General Sales List (GSL) medicines, and as such may be sold from any retail outlet. All contain paracetamol. One step which may be taken "to reduce the likelihood of self-poisoning" would be to reclassify all GSL items containing paracetamol to pharmacy medicine status. This would ensure its availability only from registered pharmacy premises under the supervision of a pharmacist who could warn of the dangers of co-administration, and could indeed prohibit the sale of products where such a problem exists.

Such a move would limit the potentially catastrophic consequences to the health of the nation (sic) which would otherwise result from supermarket chains breaking the law over retail price maintenance of licensed medicinal products. Assistants working on medicines counters in Great Britain's 13,000 community pharmacies are required to be trained to a NVQ standard which ensures vigilance against co-administration of similar products. Checkout assistants and "stack 'em high; sell 'em cheap" supermarket shelves are not so conscientious.

Medicinal products are not ordinary items of commerce; they should not be treated as such. Inducements to buy them resulting from companies flouting the retail price maintenance regulations will lead to unnecessary purchases, increasing the risk of patient harm through misinformed co-administration. Paracetamol alone, without the protection of methionine, is a prime example of such a risk.

Yours faithfully,
M.D. WILLIAMS, M.R. Pharm S,
Coventry, West Midlands.

Miss take

Sir,

Leaving aside the inaccuracies in Paul Foot's article on paracetamol and methionine (last EYE) and the amusement caused by his description of our office as "luxury", I would like to point out that even by his own figures, the 2 percent of the population with homocysteinemia would amount to well over one million people who would be at increased risk of cardiovascular disease caused by taking a compound they are unlikely to need and which would therefore be of no benefit to them.

Yours sincerely,
DR GEOFFREY BRANDON,
Paracetamol Information Centre, London SE1.

Afterthought

Sir,

Actually, my cousin is not called Victor, I've now (3.30am) remembered, and I am not too proud to admit my mistake. However, the principle stands — the Lowndes (with a "d") family have nothing whatsoever to do with Victor Lownes (without a "d"), and we find it very irritating to have the family's good name associated with pornography and gaming as in your article. There are a great many Lowndeses throughout the world, quietly living hardworking respectable lives, and none of them has any connection with this Lownes (without a "d") that I know of.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,
NGAIRE M. LOWNDES,
Carshalton, Surrey.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"People in Italy are not having enough babies, and the population is in decline. Those in the south are keeping their end up, but cannot make up for the decline in the north."

TV Euronews
(Bill Simcock)

"The racecourse is as level as a billiard ball."

JOHN FRANCOME, Channel 4
(Jim Mason)

"Barry Fry is a real kleptomaniac. He sees a player and then has to go and buy him."

TONY FRANCIS, Central TV
(Tony Cooper)

"As with most things in football the goalposts keep changing."

DAVID RHODES, Radio 4
(Alex Scoppie)

Richard Whiteley: *You don't sound very Scottish.*

Contestant: *That's because I'm from Liverpool.*

Countdown, Channel 4
(Ben Langleben)

HOM SAP

AUSTIN

"Yo! Gimme five!"

Letter from **Washington**

from Our Own Correspondent

HALF a million men turned up to answer the call of "Minister" Louis Farrakhan from the Nation of Islam cult. Its strongarm boys are known as the "Fruit of Islam" — but "Nuts of Islam" is more accurate.

The press corps purred approval for Farrakhan's "day of atonement", hailing him the undisputed leader of black America. It might be worth noting the following facts:

1 The Nutters of Islam profess a version of Islam which would be utterly alien to its founders. Islam explicitly welcomes people of all races and abjures separatism or nationalism of any sort. Nutters of Islam's founding nutter, W.D. Fard, was a travelling cloth salesman in the late 1920s. He vanished without trace in 1934 after appointing Elijah Muhammed his successor.

2 The Nutters of Islam seriously believe that white people were created in a failed experiment by Yakub, a mad black scientist, 6,000 years ago. Hence their fondness for the phrase "blue-eyed white devils".

3 Current leader Louis Farrakhan has made no secret of his anti-semitic views, but over the last year has refrained from publicly attacking Jews. Farrakhan's second-in-command Brother Muhammad (*sic*), leader of the New York Nutters, recently described Jews as "hook-nosed bagel-eaters". He was slapped on the wrist by the increasingly media-savvy Farrakhan who said he agreed with his deputy's sentiment but regretted his crude form.

4 Farrakhan was once the darling new recruit of Malcolm X. This was in the 50s when the then Louis Walcott was rescued from a career as a Calypso nightclub singer and turned overnight from "The Charmer" into Louis X. A year later, Elijah Muhammed gave him the honorific 'Farrakhan'.

5 At the Washington rally Farrakhan pointed to the White House and said Malcolm X's killers had come out of "that house". This was cheeky since Malcolm X was bumped off by the Nutters of Islam after his public break with and denunciation of Elijah, and after his call for blacks and whites to join together in the struggle *against* racial discrimination.

An amazing documentary, *Brother Minister*, documents the *de facto* collaboration between the Nutters and the FBI on the day three Nutters assassinated Malcolm X. In December 1964 Farrakhan wrote demurely in the Nutters mag, *Muhammed Speaks*: "The die is set and Malcolm shall not escape. Such a man is worthy of death." Two months later Malcolm X lay thick with bullets on the floor of the Audubon Ballroom. In *Brother Minister* an internal Nutters video shows Farrakhan arguing that Malcolm deserved to die and that even if they had killed Malcolm, white society had no right to tell the Nation how to deal with its renegades and deserters.

6 Early this year Malcolm X's daughter Qubilah Shabazz was arrested on federal charges of hiring a hitman to kill Farrakhan. It was a classic FBI entrapment exercise and did not stand up in court. But it served its purpose. Farrakhan defended Qubilah and her grateful mother, Betty Shabazz (Malcolm's widow), and effected a public reconciliation. Just in time for Farrakhan's projection as the successor to Martin Luther King and Malcolm X.

7 The biggest losers have been Jesse Jackson and black liberal intellectuals like Skip Gates and Cornel West. All three are on the left of the Democratic party and marched to Farrakhan's loony tune. Jackson's radical agenda and his vote-winning appeals to blacks and whites are now forgotten.

8 This was Farrakhan's swansong. He is dying of leukaemia. His successor, Brother Muhammad, is waiting in the wings.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

● "Barry Brinksman is an ingenious but evil man," prosecutor Steven Ipsen told a Los Angeles court. "He claimed to be an alien being, recruiting for a utopian, matriarchal planet in a distant galaxy, when he was in fact a fat, bald, one-armed bespectacled pervert, living in the Tropicana Hotel in Las Vegas and seducing adolescent girls."

Ipsen outlined how Brinksman, 59, had committed numerous sexual offences during the summer of 1990: "He told the girls that he came from Cablell, an all-Caucasian planet ruled by a Queen Click-Clack, and that his spaceship was parked at Lake Tahoe, not far from San Francisco. He said that on Cablell everyone lived by free will, and that sexual intercourse was mental, not physical. But, before they could visit his planet, the girls first had to lower their subconscious intelligence barriers, so they would be less concerned with earthly morality. and they could only do this by drinking Cablellian Ambrosia (Chivas Regal served from Tupperware mugs) and playing strip poker with him. He also told the girls that the other problem about travelling to Cablell was that they could get diseases from intergalactic space travel. The only way to build up their immunity was to have sex with him, so they could receive IREs the antibodies needed to counter the diseases. They had to have an IRE level of 100 before they could travel through space and that would take months of sex."

The trial ended with Brinksman receiving a 20-year jail sentence. One of his victims, now aged 18, admitted afterwards: "I don't feel like I was the smartest of people for going along with it." *(South China Morning Post, 25/9/95. Spotter — A.W.C. Clark)*

— ● —

● *"We are a proud parish, and we are proud of our name," Dr Hugh O'Neill warned Cork County Council at a public meeting in the Bride Valley, "which is why we object so strongly to this proposal. Apart from the environmental concerns, if Munster Crematorium Ltd are allowed to build their factory here, then Ovens will become nothing more than the butt of crematorium jokes."*

Dr O'Neill was leading a delegation of 400 resident from Ovens, Co. Cork, who had signed a petition (organised by the Ovens Community Group) against the siting of Munster's first crematorium in their parish: "Already, graffiti is appearing on walls saying 'Ovens — the crem de la crem'. If building goes ahead, generations to come will think the place was called Ovens because of the crematorium. Humorous postcards will be printed. What is more, the livelihood of fruit farmers would suffer." (The Irish Times, 17/8/95. Spotter — Meriel Forsyth)

— ● —

● "The Brikama Magistrates' Court is a national disgrace," Bruce Asemota, a law reporter and former magistrate, told fellow Gambians during the annual recess, "and I shall tell you why. Firstly, market women and children waddle through the court making loud noises when the court is in session. Secondly, I see traders erecting stalls on the premises every day. Thirdly, beggars stand at the courtroom door soliciting for clients. Fourthly, the court room is in danger of collapse, because termites have eaten through the timbers. Fifthly, the records clerk's office is infested with mice and insects which eat the paperwork. As a consequence, guilty men are often set free for lack of evidence. Sixthly, moths have eaten my wig. And seventhly, the croaking of frogs has become glaringly apparent to all inside the courtroom, and they are so loud that a great deal of time is taken to allow them to finish croaking, after which the court resumes its session.

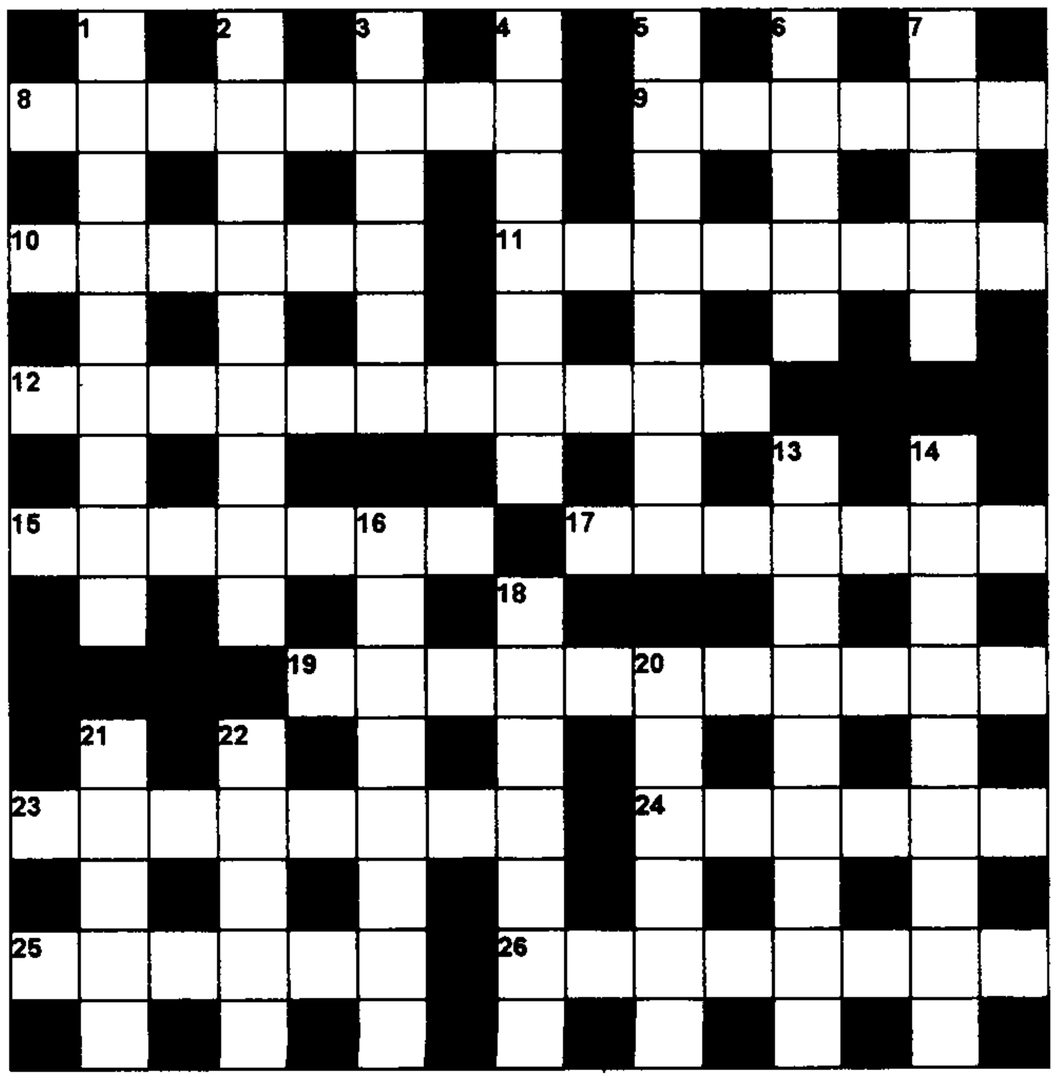
"Under the circumstances, the magistrates are doing an excellent job." *(The Point [Gambia], August 1995. Spotter — R.A.K. McFarlane)*

COMPILED BY

Victor Lewis-Smith

EYE CROSSWORD 40 by Cyclops

£100 Winner MRS J.M. BROOKE



ACROSS

8 Having it off with Cyril's the role of Rice, arguably (8)
9 Hear Bron howl for weekly Army issue (3,3)
10/19 Last-minute withdrawal in order to avoid issue (6,11)
11 Tebbit type has ruined 'names' going around screwing (5,3)
12 Boudoir left Ian knackered — he appeased in vain (11)
15 Get someone out of office by removing dress? (7)
17 Greedy heads of privatised industries owning a corporation, grabbing the whole show? (3,4)
19 (see 10)
23 It takes one real git to make a South American invader (8)
24 Shags date abandoned by Gang of Four member (6)
25 Branagh made it with Fonda — very briefly! (5,1)
26 Sixties garb causing lustful heavy breathing? (3,5)

DOWN

1 Any PC tosh churned out by a brown-noser (9)
2 *Genesis* joins Thatcher for a spot (9)
3 Time to get kids something to blow their noses on (6)
4 To back celebrity arse-licking publication is a tragedy (7)
5 Taki's was pisspoor sign of fascism (8)
6 One who votes for another unworthy — Labour finally gets in (5)
7 One out to create a good public image, David Steel? (2,3)
13 Patsy gives head to old-fashioned silly person, but needs direction first (9)
14 Strange but true: Tory leader on Ecstasy, as he might have said to a treacherous colleague (2,2,5)
16 Shameful vice once to get pregnant? (8)
18 Old town which would make an appropriate *Without Walls* subject? (7)
20 Tony, ditching centre, pursues Right with desperate air of curiosity (6)
21 Some Vietnamese who suffered heavy losses (5)
22 Thatcher swore it wasn't her intention to stick trade union leaders in the jug! (1-4)

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 10.11.95. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 39

ACROSS: 5/12 Queen's Speech 8 HP Sauce 10/22 The party faithful 11 Deport 12 (see 5) 13 Bill Cash 15 Prince of Wales 17 Defecate 18 Branch 20 Hijack 22 (see 10) 23 Rostrum 24 Eunuch.

DOWN: 1 Hush Up 2 They 3 Dump 4 Neurosis 6 Expletive 7 Sarah 9 Sod's law 13 Booze 14 Callaghan 15 Premiere 16 Chalker 18 Bribe 19 Church 21 Arse 22 Fame.

BLAIR FURY AT SHORT GAFFE

by Our Political Staff **Linda Lee Pot**

TONY BLAIR was last night incandescent with rage at one of his newly elected front bench team Ms Clare Short-Career, 49, following her amazing slip on GMTV's "No One's Watching".

Asked by Sir David Frost whether she thought cannabis should be legalised she replied that she thought the Archbishop of Canterbury should *perhaps* look into it with the assistance of some senior policemen.

Quite a good idea

Spokesmen for Tony Blair (Sid and Doris Mandelson) replied immediately by issuing the following statement:

"Tony Blair is firmly opposed to cannabis. He knows it is an extremely dangerous drug and it has very disturbing side-effects such as loss of popularity, a rash of negative pieces in the *Daily Mail* and falling polls. It is known to have mind-altering properties and can persuade people to vote Conservative instead of Labour in the course of a couple of minutes."

WHO ARE THEY?

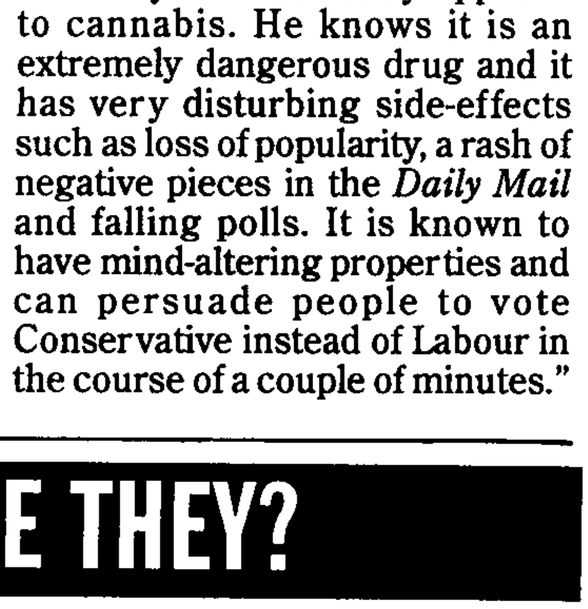
The Front Runners to Succeed Boris Yeltsin in The Number One Russian Hotseat

General Ivan Bomzalotofzem, 93, a hardline, right-wing nationalist and critic of glasnost whose policies include bombing the lot of them.

Josef Stalin Stalinovich *(no relation)*, 78, a hardline communist of the old school and critic of glasnost whose policies include bombing the lot of them.

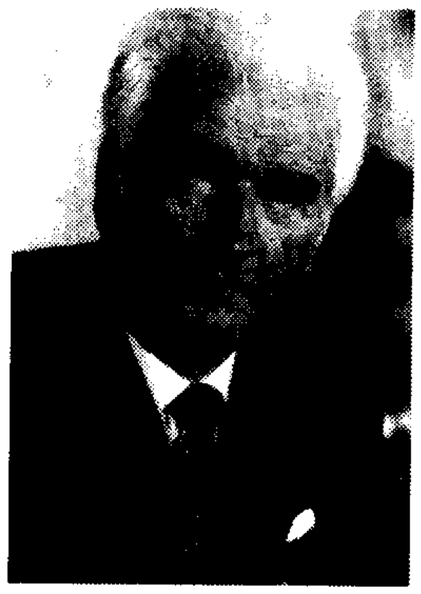
Jean-Paul Quilui?, 61, leader of the "Quebec Pour Les Loonis" movement, a hardline nationalist and critic of Conrad Blackadder's Keep Canada Dry Party. When in London he would *not* like to meet the Queen.

Dominique Lawsonovich, 32, the far-right extremist candidate due to take over from former leader



Mafioski Spivovich, 57

Charles de Boore, 34, who now succeeds Max Hitleroff, 78, who takes over from Stewart Steven, 103, who *(cont. p. 94)*



LORD MACKAY — The World's Worst Lord Chancellor Writes

HAVE you noticed how much divorce there is nowadays? Surely to goodness it's high time someone in power did something about it? Otherwise there won't be anyone left married! I have a solution to the problem. Let's make divorce easier!

WHY on earth is divorce so easy nowadays? And today I read in the paper that some idiot is trying to make it easier! Here's my answer to this tricky conundrum. Let's make divorce easier still. Then no one will be married and no one will have to get divorced! Isn't life just Grandee and Dandee when you're sitting on the woolsack!

PEOPLE often ask me what is that funny old black thing you are sitting on that looks a bit like a bean bag? It is an ingenious device to allow the Lord Chancellor to be seated whenever he so desires. They even have a name for it — The Trouser Press!

Next week

Peter McLie returns with the world's worst column

"I am told there is no finer fisherman anywhere in the world than my new editor at the Evening Standard — Sir Max Hastings. As one of the ghillies at Auchtermuchty put it to me, 'start yer suckin' up the noo Peter or you'll be awa' doon the Job Centre afore ye know it'."

Coming soon

Peter McTaki, another world's worst columnist

"Sir James Goldsmith is a fine and dandy fellow. He has formed a new political party — they even have a name for it — The Trouser Press!"

Channel 5

What you will see on Britain's newest High Quantity *(shurely 'Quality'? Ed)* Terrestrial Television Franchise run by exciting new TV talent Greg Beard!

7.00 am	Cartoons
9.00 am	Breakfast Quiz Show "Name that Toast" with puppet host Jerry Gerbil.
10.00 am	The Coffee Show with husband and wife team Dave and Sandra Coffee.
12.00 am	Cartoon update.
1.00 pm	National and International News with weathergirl Sharoon Bimbajee.
1.03 pm	Afternoon Hollywood Matinee Classic.
4.00 pm	Early Evening Hollywood Film Classic.
6.30 pm	Current Affairs Special. An in-depth look at today's biggest stories with Sharoon Bimbajee and Jerry the Gerbil.
6.32 pm	The Lottery Show. Celebrities are asked to choose which numbers they would pick for the National Lottery. Today's guests include top TV personalities Dave and Sandra Coffee, weathergirl Sharoon Bimbajee, TV 5's own Greg Beard and mystery guest Jerry the Gerbil.
8.00 pm	Mid-Evening Hollywood Film Classic.
11.00 pm	Late Night Hollywood Film Classic.
12.00 pm	The Best of Roland Rat.
3.00 am	The Sarnie Show: Guess what's in the sandwich with your host Sarah Sandwich.
7.00 am	Cartoons *(continued for ever)*.

"Do you reject Camelot and all its works?"

66 CHESTER SQUARE
LONDON SWI

Dear Bill,

I was sorry to miss you at the boss's 70th Birthday do at the Ritz or was it the Savoy? (They're all the same these days.) I got cornered by one of the marketing men from Philip Morris offering me two million bucks to do a commercial for their fairly revolting gaspers parachuting out of Concorde.

You probably saw that there was a repeat performance by the Yanks given for some reason in Washington Station and hosted by Hopalong's emaciated spouse, Nancy. The old boy failed to show, claiming a general loss of powers due to Alzheimer's, but, as I said to the E.S., that hadn't stopped me from donning the bib and tucker.

When we finally sat down I noted that the seat next to the boss was vacant and that she was having to lean across an empty chair to catch the E.S.'s pleasantries. I asked that bearded johnny who used to play God in the Bible films who it was who had failed to show and he muttered something about a newt which I took to be a reference to my personal demeanour and jolly unfair, as it happened, I having by that stage merely consumed one of those disgusting American shorts called a Mississippi Buckshot with bits of coconut floating about on top. The Almighty however explained to me that the absentee was one Newt (short for Newton) Gingrich, speaker of their parliament and the boss's number one fan in the US. I said he couldn't be such a big fan if he couldn't be bothered to show up, but just then he trundled in full of apologies — terrible traffic, some ghastly black men's demo bringing the town to a halt, etc, etc. He turned out to be a perfectly reasonable sort of chap, all in favour of abolishing income tax and welfare payments and after the initial froideur he and the boss hit it off like a couple of old buddies, although I don't think she had the faintest idea who he was.

The good news is that the Boy Mark was nowhere to be seen, he and his blonde spouse having packed their bags and hopped it to South Africa where they have purchased a luxury thatched mansion complete with swimming pool and all the trimmings. I rang my friend Mrs Van der Kaffirbasher to ask her to keep an eye on them and warn me of any pending embarrassment to the house of Thatcher, but Mrs Mombolu, her new housekeeper, said she had taken one of her rotties to the vet to have him put down after he bit the neighbour's leg off.

I enclose an encouraging piece from the Telegraph saying that alcohol and nicotine help to ward off Alzheimer's. Pity nobody showed it to Hopalong.

Yours, nearly one over the eight,

Denis

WHO WILL WIN THE BATTLE OF THE BOX?

Yes, it's 'Cracker vs Austen' in this year's TV Title Fight!

by Our Media Staff **Mark Bawson**

MAKE no mistake — the whole country has been gripped by Cracker vs Austen mania!

From Land's End to John o'Groats, from Belfast to Billericay, from the Guardian to the Daily Mail, we're all writing the same terrible piece!

Did you watch Colin Firth as heartthrob Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice* or Robbie Coltrane as larger-than-life Fitz in *Cracker*?

Did you tune in to see flame haired Detective Sergeant Penhaligon or turn over to catch beauty in a bonnet Lizzie Bennet?

Did you set the video for seedy Sergeant Beck or look forward to seeing creepy Mr Collins?

It's the clash of the titans and *(OK, we get the picture — Ed).*

HOW THEY SHAPE UP

	Pride and Prejudice	Cracker
Serial Rape	0	4
Vicious Murder	0	3
Chisels	0	1
Use of word 'Vagina'	0	10
Dead Prostitutes falling downstairs leaving trail of blood	0	1
Quadrilles	17	0
Outings to Pemberley	*(That's enough. Ed.)*	

"I'm just ringing to let everyone know I'm an arsehole…"

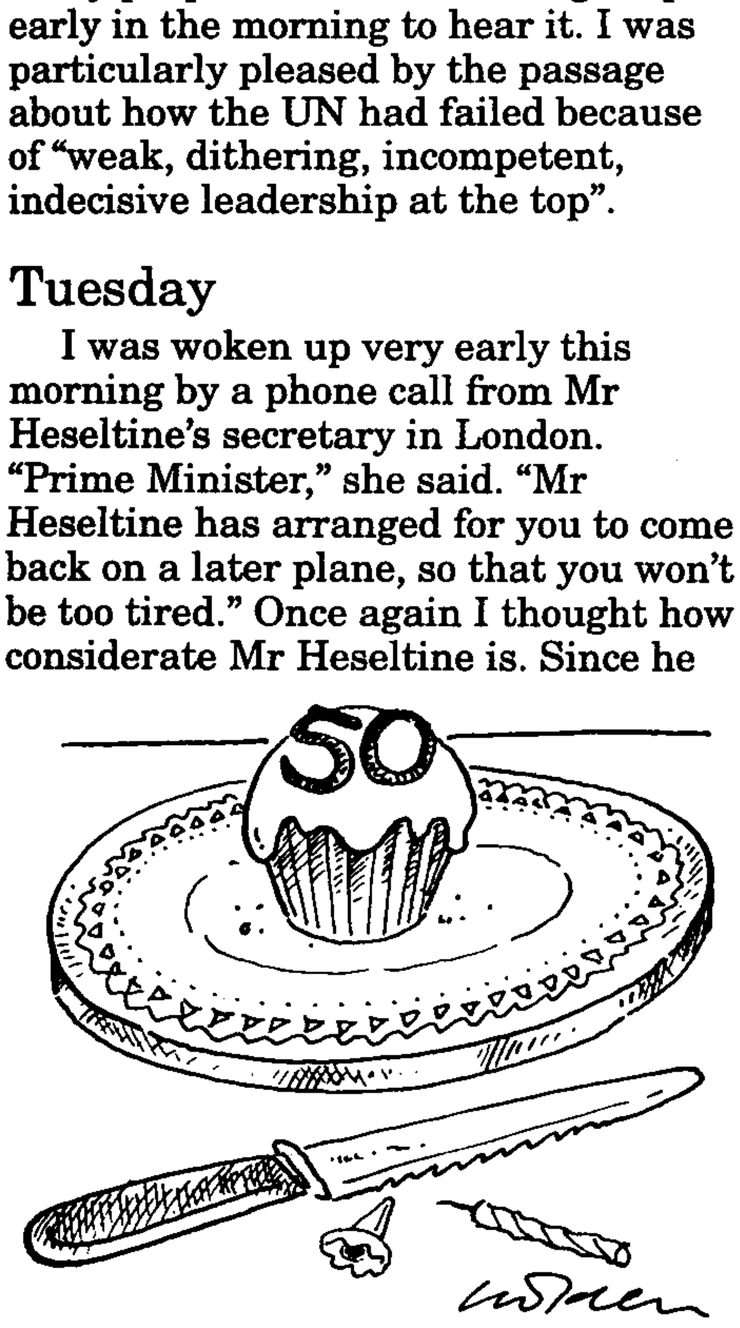
The Secret Diary of John Major aged 47¾

Monday

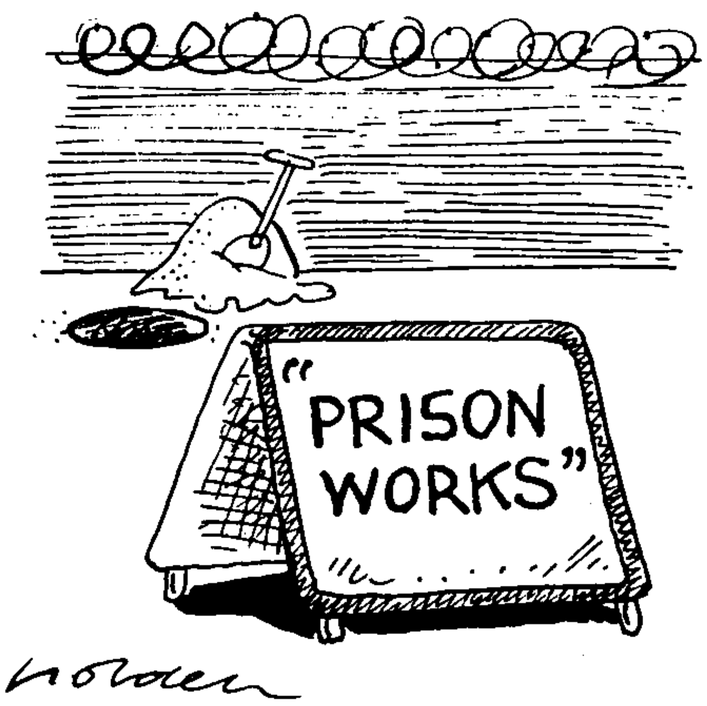
Today is a very historic week. I am in America where I have been chosen to be one of the "Top 150 Leaders of Mankind" to address the United Nations on its 50th birthday. A lot of very important people have been invited to speak with me. They include Sir Matthias Umbrellawallah, the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Cameroons; Señor Jerez di Oporto, the Portuguese Trade Minister; Mrs Gro Bag Rasmussen, the famous Norwegian Minister for Fjords; Prince Abdul Qum Danzin of the United Arab Sultanate Federation; and many others from all over the world. I spoke at 6.30 in the morning, which I was told by the UN was a very coveted slot, since it meant my speech would be carried live on prime time television all over the Pacific Rim, which is a very important part of the world. Oh yes. My speech, which lasted 90 seconds, was written by Mr Norris Morris and a team of no less than 50 of our most high-powered civil servants. The theme was "Bureaucratic Waste and Over-Manning". I think it went down very well, although unfortunately not many people had been able to get up so early in the morning to hear it. I was particularly pleased by the passage about how the UN had failed because of "weak, dithering, incompetent, indecisive leadership at the top".

Tuesday

I was woken up very early this morning by a phone call from Mr Heseltine's secretary in London. "Prime Minister," she said. "Mr Heseltine has arranged for you to come back on a later plane, so that you won't be too tired." Once again I thought how considerate Mr Heseltine is. Since he took up his new job as First Secretary and Head of the Government I have had much more time to do the really important tasks of a prime minister, such as keeping my notebooks up to date and reading the newspapers to see what silly mistakes my ministers have made.



My wife Norman and I got back to Downing Street just in time for the 10 o'clock news. Imagine my surprise when I saw Mr Heseltine sitting in my seat and pretending he was me during Prime Minister's Question Time. Unfortunately, Mr Heseltine made the elementary mistake of trying to answer the questions without a ring-binder giving all the answers, so, as I told Norman, "he is not making a very good job of it". "Well, he is standing in for you," she said, giving one of her funny looks.



Wednesday

Today Mr Howard had to explain to the House of Commons why he would not be resigning. As usual he did this absolutely brilliantly, as he has now had a lot of practice at it. He said that the reason why so many prisoners had escaped was because of a Mr Lewis. "Mr Lewis is totally responsible for everything to do with the prisons," he said. "I cannot intervene in any way, which is why I have now sacked him." This got a tremendous cheer from our side. Then Mr Straw, who is the Labour spokesman for people getting out of prison, tried to be even cleverer than Mr Howard. "I would draw to the House's attention," he said, "Section 47(b) of the Escaping From Prisons Regulations 1973, which makes it quite clear that, under Paragraph 18, sub section 5(d), Mr Howard should clearly have resigned." This was only part of Mr Straw's question, which went on for nearly an hour, by which time all the MPs had left the chamber. "They've all escaped," said Mr Howard, with a brilliant smirk, "just like one of my prisons — I mean Mr Lewis's."

Thursday

I was very not inconsiderably annoyed indeed to be woken up at 9.30 last night by my brother Terry telling me to make sure that I stayed in tonight to watch his new TV show, which is called "It's Terry-Ball!" "Don't you forget," he said, "like you did with my birthday, when you forgot to send me a card, even though you have hundreds of civil servants with nothing to do except remind you when it is someone's birthday." "Don't you realise," I told him in my of course-Mr-Howard-shouldn't-resign voice, "that I am far too busy running the country to remember things like your birthday. For instance, I have just been in New York." "We all did that last year, John," said Terry, displaying in my judgement the kind of older-brother-knows-best superiority he used to show when telling me what colour to paint the hats on the garden ornaments, which all the sneering cleverdicks in London insist on calling gnomes, which they aren't. They are more like elves or dwarves, if you want to call them anything, rather than garden ornaments, which is what they really are. I hope I have now made this clear and drawn a line under the whole matter of the naming of garden ornaments, which is not honestly a subject I have any time to worry about, since I have much more important things to do, like putting Terry in my "Bastard" book under T, between "Teresa", ie Mrs Gorman, and that other woman who begins with T who I never mention, ie Mrs Thatcher.

Friday

Norman insisted on watching Terry's television programme even though I was very busy going through my briefing documents prior to my very important meeting with Mr Monsieur Chirac.

Halfway through, when Terry was looking down a big hole in the ground, I said to Norma: "It is very annoying to have such an embarrassing brother." "Oh, I don't know," she said. "I don't think Terry minds."

At the end of the programme which I did not watch (because I was far too busy reading the notes Mr Heseltine had kindly prepared for my meeting with Mr Monsieur Chirac), Terry tried to deliver a postcard to Number 10, but was quite rightly stopped at the iron gates at the end of the street. As I explained to Norman: "Mrs Thatcher did one good thing at least — putting up the gates so that Terry cannot get in with his postcard."

GENIUS DIES
A Nation Mourns

by Our Racing Staff **Unlucky Jim**

THE equine world was in a state of shock last night after the death of Sir Kingsley Rum, described as the greatest steeplechaser of our age.

Tributes to the former Booker winner poured in from stables all over Britain.

At his Combe Florey stud, the legendary Evelyn's Lad said: "He was the greatest of us all — almost as great as me. We shall never see his like again."

From Cumbria, South Bank Boy whinnied: "His interview with me was one of the great masterpieces of television."

First Past The Pist

From East Anglia, History Man neighed: "He was a huge influence on me, which is why the world owes him a great debt."

From his Henley-on-Thames loose box, Rumpole of the Bailey snorted: "What a sweetie. I often used to see him at the trough in the Garrick. As we used to say, you can lead a horse to water, but he preferred a large Scotch."

However, there were critics of the wonderhorse in the racing world, particularly among fillies.

They said that although Red Face had started well, and even romped home in the Booker when he was already past retirement age, he had ended up as a sad old hack, wandering aimlessly about in the paddock, biting people who wouldn't buy him a drink.

Said one mare: "He was a mean old misogynist. He liked his oats, but he never understood anything about relationships between horses".

Sport of Kingsleys

Others criticised his attitude to his even more famous colt Martin Rum. "I never watch his races," he once said, "I don't like modern horses."

However, there is no doubt that Sir Redface will be hugely missed at his beloved Garrick Stables, where he has spent the last 20 years happily put out to grass with other legends of the past, such as Bow Tie Robin, Telegraph's Perry and Little Lord Mogg.

Your Tips Tonight

Booker Handicap, £20,000

Fatwa 7-2, Token Women 15-8, Justin Carthorse 20-1, Man With Beard 33-1, Colonial Boy 66-1 (Martin Rum withdrawn).

"With you in a second – just thinning out the workforce"

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(whomsoever that may be these days)

From Sir Herbert Gusset

SIR—It may interest your readers to know that this month has been the hottest and longest October in this part of the West Country since records began in 1323. This has resulted in many freakish occurrences, never before witnessed.

For instance, only the other night, returning from a meeting of our local Get Britain Out Of Europe and Millennium Project Committee in the Lamb and Flag, I observed the following remarkable phenomena:

1. Daffodils bursting into flower in the Festival of Britain Memorial Garden by our village post office.

2. A pair of nightjars busily constructing their fifth nest this year in the Sky dish on the wall of the cottage occupied by my good friend Lt. Col. Buffy Frobisher.

3. A row of palm trees sprouting in the Rev. Purvis's garden.

4. Millions of pink flamingos searching for fish in the dried-up bed of the River Jaspan.

5. Giant North American bullfrogs, several feet high, roaming freely down the village street, croaking ominously.

But strangest of all, as we arrived at my garden gate, an enormous creature with leathery skin and staring yellow eyes loomed up from behind the privet hedge in the most menacing fashion. Shortly afterwards, I confess, I lost consciousness, due to the oppressive heat of the October night.

But let readers bear in mind the age-old wisdom of my trusty gardener, old Seth McCaskill:

"If lilacs bloom in autumn time
Then look out for frost and rime
And if daffydills do flower by the end of October
Then by Advent-tide best not be sober."

There are, I should point out, several hundred more verses of this infallible guide to the mysterious ways of Mother Nature, but I fear I must not trespass further on the patience of your esteemed letters editor, Mr Twiston-Shout, assuming, that is, that he has not yet been given the post of Editor of the Spectator.

SIR H. GUSSET
Villa del Sol
Dominic St Lawson
Dorset

SALE NOTICE

Owing to bankruptcy the following businesses are to be auctioned to the highest bidder (*or any bidder at all*):

1. **The Virago Publishing Company**
(only one non-careful woman owner)
Included are several million unsold copies of the following feminist classics:
My New Zealand Childhood by Rosamund Wallaby
The Virago Book of Short Stories by Young Mexican Female Writers (ed. *Loelia Merrydyke*)
Love In Uniform by Vera Strapbodice
My Dad Was A Total Bastard by Germaine Wombat
and millions of others even worse than this.
Guide price 25p

2. **The Channel Tunnel Company**
(formerly the property of Alastair Mortonsofmoney)
comprising: ● 1 very fine tunnel, not very much used ● Two entrances, one at either end of same ● Er… ● That's it.
Reserve price £200 million billion.

3. **The Conservative Party**
(formerly the property of a lady)
Sold as seen, with all faults.
Assets include: ● Er… ● That's it.
Current debts: £20 million.
Any offer considered.

ADVERTISEMENT

THE REFERENDUM PARTY.

Statement of James (surely 'Aims'? Ed)

Why do we need the Referendum Party?

We don't.

No, but seriously, why do we need the Referendum Party?

Because I say so.

And who are you?

I am Sir Jams Fishpaste, an incredibly rich man with nothing to do. And that is why I am intending to field 10,000 candidates at the next election whose only duty will be to impose a referendum on the British people.

And what will your referendum be about?

The supreme issue of the time. Next question.

What is the supreme issue of the time?

That is what my referendum will decide. Just you wait and see. I will show them, just like I did with my world-famous, mould-breaking *Talbot!* magazine.

Oh, what was that?

Buffoon, Idiot, Schweinhund. I tell you, when my Referendum Party takes power, there will be no place for stupid questions like yours.

Sir Fishpaste, tell me frankly, are you a believer in democracy?

Of course, you fool. That is the whole point of my Referendum Party. I must give the people the chance to vote for me and to recognise that I am their true leader.

That's very interesting, Sir Jams, but, seriously, you are completely mad, aren't you?

No, dumkopf. I am a true-born Englishman.

Then why do you live in Mexico and represent a French constituency in the European Parliament?

The European Parliament is a waste of time. These questions are irrelevant. Only my referendum is important.

But, surely, Sir Fishfinger, the only result of your ridiculous scheme will be to split the Tory vote and let the Labour Party win?

Das ist gut! We must destroy them all! Only then can a new democratic, British party emerge with a leader who has the vision, the courage and the marmite to win the greatest victory ever known in the history of mankind.

Don't you think it's time you had a lie down and took your tablets?

Thank you very much.

Issued by Screaming Lord Fishpaste on behalf of the Monster Raving Referendum Party.

If you wish to stand as one of the 10,000 candidates, please apply in writing to your doctor who will give you the tablets and tell you to lie down.

THE OLD SAATCHI COMPANY WANTS THE SEVERAL HUNDRED THOUSAND YOU OWE THEM FOR THE LAST TORY ELECTION CAMPAIGN!
TELL THEM WE'RE BUSY WRITING A SPEECH!
"WE TORIES HAVE HAD ENOUGH OF SCROUNGERS AND CHISLERS!..."

"Trick or Treat?"

Old Songs Revisited

Daisy, Daisy

as sung at the nuptials of Miss Daisy Waugh and the Hon. Beauclerk de Montmorency de la Fabricant.

Daisy, Daisy
Give me your answer do.
Your dad's crazy
And edits the *Literary Review.*

It will be a stylish marriage
Though your dad won't fit in
the carriage.
But you'll look sweet
At his country seat
On the cover of *Hello!* magazine
who are paying for the whole thing.

Anon.

OJ's Playboy jury girl

THIS is the OJ Simpson juror who is to bare all for Playboy. Air hostess Tracy Hampton, 25, stripped naked for a photo-shoot across a 12-seat mock-up of a jury panel. She was released from jury duty in May after claiming the trial had made her a nervous wreck and is said to have attempted suicide.

TRACY

Daily Express

SUNDAY TIMES STYLE

Your Guide to Clueless Jargon!

IT'S the new linguistic craze that's sweeping Britain! After the hit film of the Conservative Party Conference, *everyone* wants to talk clueless! The language sensation of the year!

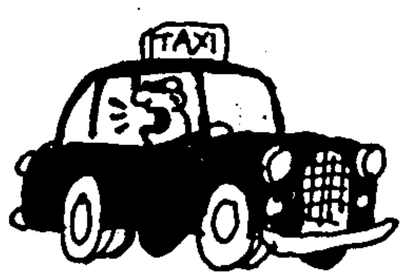
Sex.
Clothes.
Popularity.

Is There A Problem Here?

Clueless	**Unstylish, unhip, in Government**
Babe	**Illegitimate child of Minister**
Baldwin	**Stanley Baldwin. Attractive, one-nation Tory role model**
Betty	**Betty Boothroyd. Attractive Labour Speaker of House of Commons**
As If	**To behave "as if" one were going to win the next election**
Mentally Challenged	**Michael Portillo**
Rail Privatisation	**Bad idea; unhelpful suggestion**
Tony Chair	**Good looking, popular, charismatic, lead character who has it all**
Major	**Clueless.**

(Cont. p. 94)

A Taxi-Driver writes



Each week a well-known taxi driver is invited to comment on an issue of topical importance.

This week:

Asylum Seekers

by **Mike Howard (Cab No. 7243725)**

They've got a nerve haven't they Guv? All those darkies runnin' away from wherever they live and expecting us to foot the bleedin' bill?! I mean most of them come from perfectly good places like you know Nigeria and Algeria and… er… Bosnia and suchlike. You know what I'd do with them? String 'em up. It's the only language they understand, including English. No, I'm serious, guv, string 'em up!!

That's what would happen to them at home!

I had that Bernie Grant in the back of the cab once…

NEXT WEEK: Pete Lilley (Cab No 1725621) on Social Security fraud.

THE SUN SAYS

Lotta Nerve!

WHY on earth should our Lottery money be given to stinking rich people so that they can swan about going to the opera and the ballet! So much for art!!

And why should it be given to so-called deserving immigrants who come over here to sponge off our country!! So much for charity!!

Blimey what a disgrace! It would be like handing over your hard earned 25p for a copy of the *Sun* and finding that millions of pounds of your money were going straight to some incredibly rich foreigner who doesn't give a damn about art *or* charity and *(You're fired — Rupert Murdoch)*.

New From The Official Solicitor

Your Souvenir Of The Trial Of The Century

Made In Finest Bone Fragment China, with Portraits by Official News At Ten Artist

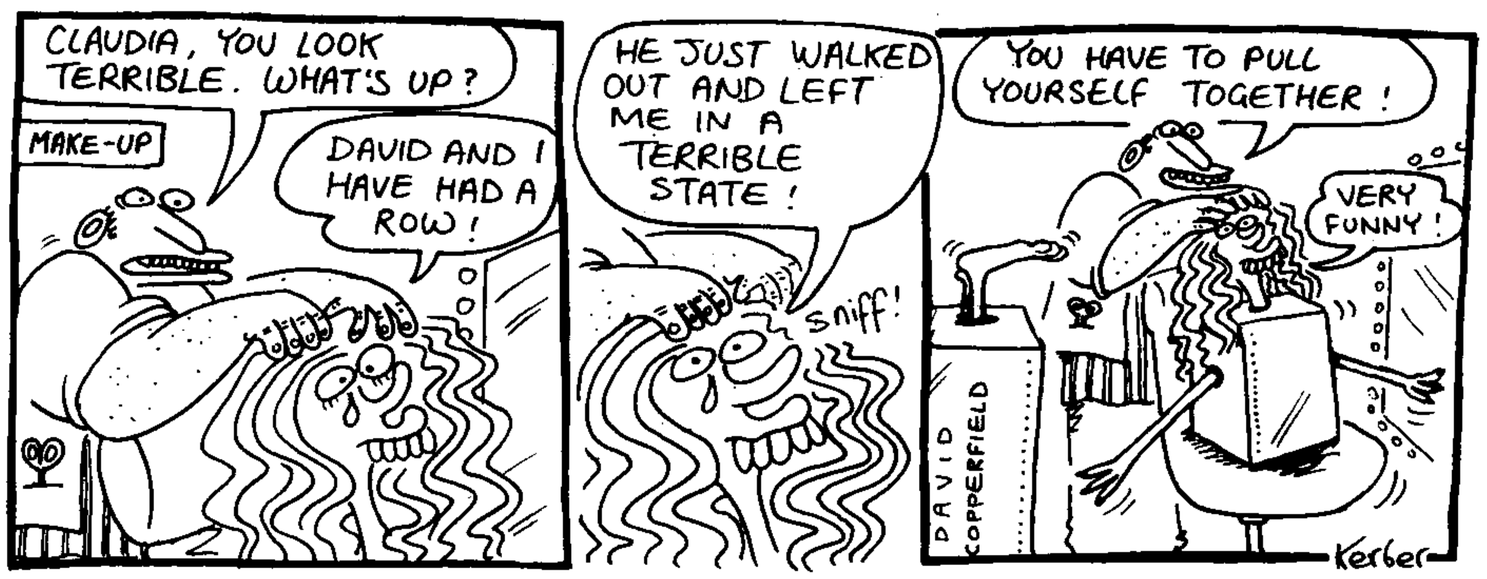
This delightful commemorative gift has been specially commissioned by the Official Solicitor on behalf of the West estate, which owns the copyright to the life and memory of the late Frederick West Esq.

The Official Solicitor, in seeking to maximise public outrage (shurely 'profits for the benefit of the Estate'?) is also offering: tea towels, T-shirts, baseball caps and a host of other commemorative items.

For full catalogue, send £25 to The Official Solicitor, Cashin House, Sick Street, Lawyer-On-The-Make, Glos.

SUPERMODELS

KERBER


CLAUDIA, YOU LOOK TERRIBLE. WHAT'S UP?
MAKE-UP
DAVID AND I HAVE HAD A ROW!
HE JUST WALKED OUT AND LEFT ME IN A TERRIBLE STATE!
sniff!
YOU HAVE TO PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER!
VERY FUNNY!
DAVID COPPERFIELD
Kerber

Christian de Billy welcomes our guests.

Pol Roger Newsletter

CAUGHT and CIRCULATED

HIGHGROVE

His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales will be attending the Ritz Hotel at a party to mark the coming out of his mistress. Mrs Camilla Parker-Bowles will be presented to representatives of the world's press and attended by photographers, including Signor Slizi Papparazzi from Italian periodical *Shaggi* and Monsieur Zut Alors from the French journal *Paris Snatch*. His Royal Highness will dance briefly with Mrs Parker-Bowles and then pretend not to know her for the rest of the evening. They will leave separately via the kitchens and meet in a lay-by on the A32. Colonel Parker-Bowles will remain at the function looking rather silly.

KENSINGTON PALACE

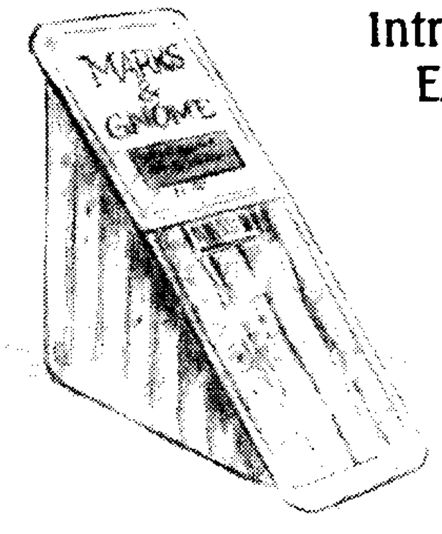
Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales will be at home in the morning cutting out pictures of Mrs Parker-Bowles from the newspapers and flushing them down the toilet. She will be attended by Mr Richard Kay, Journalist by Appointment, and will proceed to St Virginia's Hospital in London to witness a particularly gruesome heart bypass operation. She will later appear in a good light in the Daily Mail.

ETON

His Royal Highness Prince William will be attending a Snogathon Rave Ball at the Hammersmith Palace *(shurely 'Palais'? Ed)*. He will be accompanied by a bevy of mini-skirted beauties including Lady Bimbo Grope (17), The Rt Hon Leggy Canoodle-Disco (15), Miss Tini Weeny-Bikini (12), and Araminta Parker-Bowles (11). His Royal Highness will begin the evening hanging around with his mates on one side of the room whilst the girls dance with each other. Later, after a number of ciders and a bottle of Martini that Charlie Gillespie-Fortescue has borrowed from his father's drinks cabinet, he will approach one of the sizzling teen sexpots and say: "What GCSEs are you going to do?" The Prince will then meet Rt Hon Alexander Rufus-Isaacs (12) in the gentlemen's conveniences who will present him with a complimentary Marlboro cigarette and a polo mint for afterwards.

New from

Marks and Gnome



Introducing our new range of Exotic Sandwiches

Smoked Salmonella and Kumquat

Edwina Curried Chicken and Passionfruit

BSE with Mayo (triple pack)

If you have eaten these sandwiches in the last 24 hours, you may well be dead. If so, ring our new M and G Sarnie Helpline on 0898-64412.

Great Bores Of Today.

"... who on earth is this man Paul Bambergascoigne? is that it? some disc jockey from radio 2? if we wanted a silly American with all his rock and pop then we would tune in to Terry Wogan I mean what is this classical collection thing? Why don't we just call it Top of the Pops and be done with it? in at Number One? what's that supposed to mean? what's wrong with Composer of the Week I'd like to know... Beethoven Brahms sometimes a new johnny you hadn't heard of but you didn't mind that why doesn't he just stop talking and let us listen to the music? *the beautiful haunting refrain of Wagner's Parsifal echoing through the mists of time and bubbling under...* lord luvaduck I've never heard such rubbish in all my life switch over to Classic FM darling for heaven's sake and let's have Henry Kelly now there's a chap who really knows about classical music..."

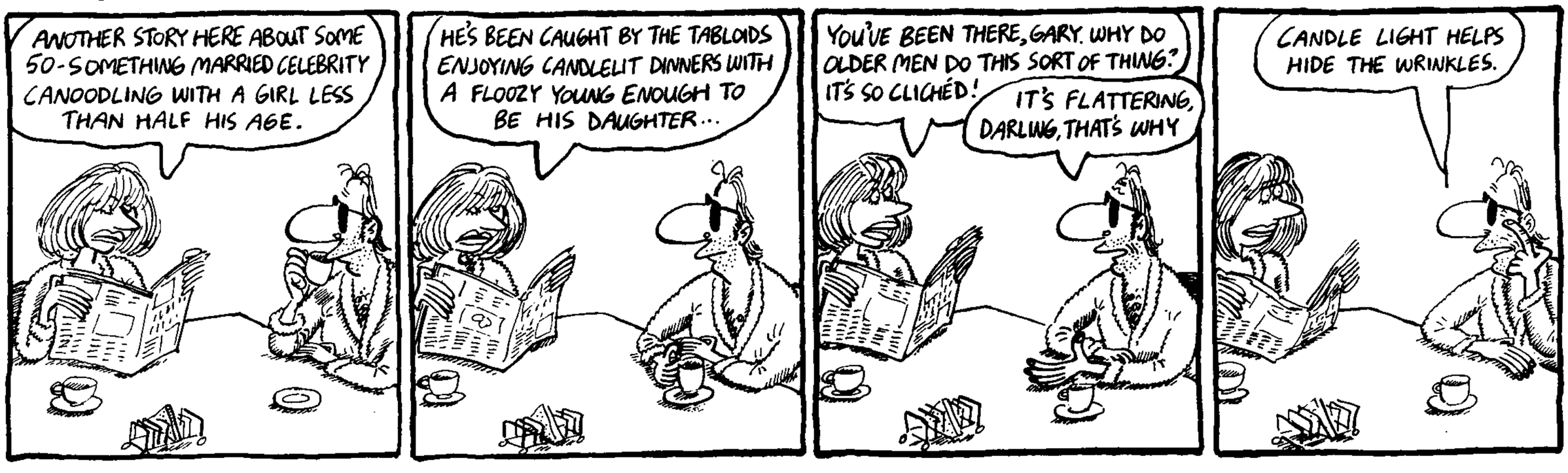
Westbury-sub-Mendip

A mistake in the report of Westbury-sub-Mendip WI last week said members were mortified that subscriptions had risen. It should have read members were notified that subscriptions had risen.

Wells Journal

Celeb

LIGGER


ANOTHER STORY HERE ABOUT SOME 50-SOMETHING MARRIED CELEBRITY CANOODLING WITH A GIRL LESS THAN HALF HIS AGE.
HE'S BEEN CAUGHT BY THE TABLOIDS ENJOYING CANDLELIT DINNERS WITH A FLOOZY YOUNG ENOUGH TO BE HIS DAUGHTER...
YOU'VE BEEN THERE, GARY. WHY DO OLDER MEN DO THIS SORT OF THING? IT'S SO CLICHÉD!
IT'S FLATTERING, DARLING, THAT'S WHY
CANDLE LIGHT HELPS HIDE THE WRINKLES.

DIARY

PAULA YATES

I WAS wearing a cerise bodystocking with rubber trousers that moulded themselves into my bottom and a push-up bra beneath a leather catsuit with a zip in every place where it matters when Iggy Stooge took out his dick and waggled it in front of me. I wouldn't have minded, only I was talking to HRH Princess Margaret in Westminster Abbey at the time. I'll tell you what though — his is the crotch to end all crotches, like the Eiffel Tower seen close-up on a clear day. And the Princess couldn't keep her eyes off it.

But Iggy is nothing like the press say. In fact, he's absolutely smashing and sensitive and compassionate and very, very shy and would never do anything uncalled for. So why do the Press go on about him being some sort of sex-beast, the kind of guy who would wiggle his dick around in front of royalty? And Princess Margaret is lovely too: funny and charming and utterly fabby as well as being a great cook. So it makes me sick the way the Press go on about rock stars and royalty — and all based on zilch. But for a fuller description of Iggy, Margaret and the Eiffel Dick — plus fabby photos — you'll have to read my autobiography, serialised every day in *The Sun*, which is totally fantastic.

My image in the media has nothing to do with reality. I was always, and still am, a creature of contradictions. I am a deep-down puritan, refusing to eat out at restaurants which are sniffy about ladies giving rock stars blow-jobs between courses. And on the other hand I am an intellectual who's read countless books, quite a lot with no pictures. Yet there's nothing I like more than one of my famous friends getting his dick out and waggling it around to the sound of Heavy Metal. I derive incredible strength from the care and support of the ordinary people of this country — builders, hairdressers, personal masseuses, chauffeurs, etc — yet for real soul-mates I look to Hollywood and the Top Ten. I would do anything to guard my privacy, but only if there is a photographer from *Hello!* magazine there to record the moment. As my great friend David Bowie — he's shy and funny and creative and incredibly philosophical — once whispered into my ear at a top Hollywood party: "You're a real paradox, Paula". Then he got out his dick and waggled it around, which was just totally fantastic.

I am proud to have been associated with the legendary programme The Tube — that mythical, magical show which changed the whole face of culture in the world forever. I have some fantastic memories of all the legendary musicians I met in those five historic years — musicians of the calibre of Sven Burk from Up Your Arse, Gash, the ex-bassist in Chronik Zitz and the great Bumrush Watkins, the now tragically-deceased but then-still-living lead-singer with Burp.

I've forgotten all the most memorable stories about those days, but one or two stick in the mind. Like the time the beautiful, sweet and very funny Gary Kemp from Spandau Ballet vomited over my spandex boob tube saying — whoops — he thought I was the microphone. Or the time the lead guitarist of Jippy Tummy looked me straight in the eye, opened his mouth and threw up over his lead singer. Or the time the incredibly sweet Jon Bon Jovi vomited up over the floor and then agreed to autograph it with his ginormous hard-on, showing once again that the Press has got it all wrong when they say he's not thoughtful.

My years with Bob Geldof were all totally fantastic so it was a shame I had to leave him when it didn't work out. But we're still fantastic friends and I knew Bob would never tell anyone in the Press about our life together, letting me do it instead.

In all the seventeen years I was with him Bob never washed and he only once let me cut his hair. "I never knew you were once in the Boy Scouts," I said, halfway through. "Jayzus, Paula!" said Bob, "How did you know that?" "I just found your cap," I replied.

Sometimes I worried he never washed. "I wish you'd take those brown corduroy trousers off," I said to him one day. "I just have," he answered. But when I left him for the much cleaner and more beautiful Michael Hutchence and told the world what a demon snake-hipped sex-god Michael was, and how much more patient Michael was with the kids, and how Michael is mad about my knockout new boobs, Bob was very supportive, keeping very quiet about it, which is totally fantastic.

It was when I had flown to America with the lovely, sexy, funny Duran Duran to attend a party for the funny, lovely, sexy Jack Nicholson with the sexy, lovely, funny Barbra Streisand that I first met the funny, sexy, lovely Sylvester Stallone, who introduced me to Quentin Tarantino, who turned out to be as sexy, lovely and funny as I had always imagined.

The temperature of the party room was only average, so I was just wearing a leopard-skin thong and a see-through, one-inch PVC boob tube inscribed with the words "Take Me" in shiny gold letters. For some reason, Quentin couldn't keep his hands off me, nor could fellow party guests Gregory Peck, John Travolta, Batman director Tim Burton, Terence Trent D'Arby, author Alex Haley and the cast and production team of "Roots" and Leonard Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. Top International Statesman Caspar Weinburger rubbed up against me with a terrific hard-on, former President Gerald Ford kept showing me snaps of himself dressed in his leather posing-pouch and leading playwright Arthur Miller got out his dick and waggled it about. They were all funny and lovely and sexy, and with the natural compassion of the rich and famous they understood instinctively that I am an enigmatic creature of contradictions who above all else values her privacy, which was totally fantastic.

So now Michael and me are settling down, forging a private life for ourselves away from the hounds in the media. We'll be at London's famous Halkin Hotel for a short season from the 25th-31st, and then on to The Ritz and The Dorchester before embarking on our short worldwide tour of the bridal suites of Sheraton Internationals, tickets still available. A full-colour book of our tour will be out shortly, with the accompanying video due next week. It's all totally fantastic, n'est-ce pas?

"I'm shattered. Let's just microwave an M&S lasagne"

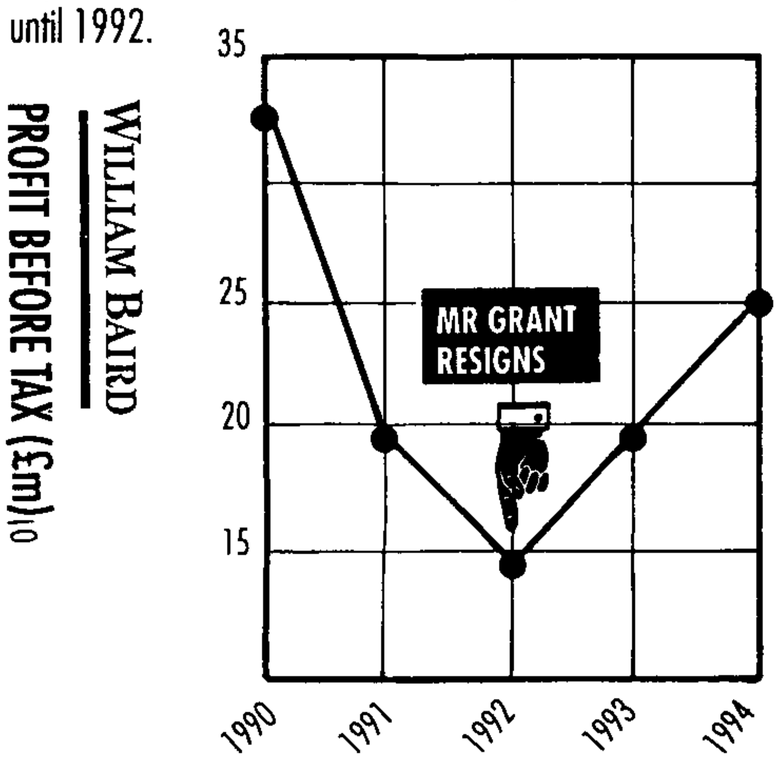
FAWCETT MILL FIELDS

Lesbian Bonfire Weekend
3-5 November £95

Advertisement in The Forester

British Management Part 29.

DAVID GRANT CBE, Lord Lieutenant and Custos Rotulorum of Durham. Former Chairman Teeside Productivity Association and Northern Industrial Development Board. Deputy Chairman William Baird, clothing manufacturers, until 1992.



William Baird plc Profits			
1990	£33.1m	1992	£14.2m
1991	£19.3m	1993	£19.6m
		1994	£25.1m

SIGNAL FAILURES

THE *Eye*'s claim (875) that the rail companies are hell bent on destroying the Uckfield line in Kent and Sussex is backed up by an internal BR memo that has been passed to the *Eye*.

The memo, to the BR chief executive from the general manager of BR Southern region, says: "No major expenditure should be incurred on this line." This includes "no further track renewals", and the memo adds: "The closure of the line will follow when renewals become necessary."

Before a closure proposal could pass a public hearing, however, it was necessary to slash the usage of the trains. The lack of maintenance and the prevailing attitude in BR led to sections of the branch line being reduced from double to single track in 1990 — to the horror of some qualified observers. This in turn made possible the head-on crash at Cowden last October (see *Eyes passim*) which resulted in a perception that the line is not as safe as it should be and the imposition of an inconvenient service every 90 minutes rather than every hour.

The consequent loss of traffic neatly paves the way for the closure of the line when track renewals become necessary.

PS: In 1989 Michael Portillo, then transport minister, wrote: "It is wrong to suggest that British Rail is allowing the Uckfield line to deteriorate. BR are already committed to improving services on the Uckfield line."

PROOF of how privatisation has ruined the economics of Red Star parcels (*Eye* 880) comes from a publishing firm in Kent.

It was told that to send 200 magazines by Red Star from London Waterloo to Bournemouth would cost £126.38. This is far more than the fare for a human being — a living one, anyway — and the firm calculates that a member of staff could have carried the magazines in first class, bought a meal on the train, returned by first class and still saved £35 on the Red Star bill. Or the member of staff could have made the 108-mile journey roughly six times in standard class.

THE three rolling stock leasing companies (ROSCOs), who currently enjoy a monopoly, are due to be sold off.

They have managed to stitch up a monopoly among themselves because there are no spare trains to stimulate competitive pricing. But there is nothing to stop firms in future building large numbers of new trains (in France, Germany or Japan) and leasing them at attractive rates to British train operators.

This would leave the ROSCOs desperately trying to find takers for 2,000 non-crashworthy carriages built in the 1950s and 60s, cheap and nasty Pacer railbuses and other obsolete junk from the legacy of two decades of chronic under-investment in British Rail.

THE privatised railway is particularly impressive at Basingstoke.

Passengers there have already been barred from joining Regional Railways' near-empty trains to Waterloo (*Eye* 868), and a similar restriction now applies to trains in the opposite direction.

InterCity trains to Bournemouth and Southampton are no longer publicised on the information screens at Basingstoke, so passengers are diverted to the rival South West Trains services. This is to simplify the accounting for South West Trains, which is due to be privatised early next year.

BIRTSPEAK has been extended to cover Management Drivel in *all* spheres (not just the BBC). *£10 paid for examples.*

An executive implementation planning group has been formed to take forward transitional issues. It is made up of representatives from key areas that will be impacted upon field restructuring, these include BUI, Business Change, Personnel, BA Estates, Training, EOI, ISBP, EOMS and many others.

The group met on 26/7/95, each member brought expertise from their own area to help tease out the different strands. Each member will also have the responsibility to keep their area informed! The group will develop plans to make sure that all strands dovetail smoothly. Developments will of course be cascaded!

– Memo to field staff from the Business Communication Manager for Business Change Management Team at the Contributions Agency

NORTHERN rail bosses have found a clever way to drive even more people off the railways.

Regional Railways' North East company recently launched a new Cleethorpes-Manchester airport service. Though the service stops at Stockport near Manchester airport to let off passengers who are not going to the airport, drivers have been told not to let anyone on, the view being that "not picking up passengers makes the trains run on time".

When travellers complained the company had a brilliant answer: people would be better off *driving* from Stockport to Manchester airport as there is a "very good direct road".

'Dr B. Ching'

BOOKS & BOOKMEN

THE increasingly mad Chinese woman who runs the Sheil-Land literary agency has just issued a further writ against Giles Gordon, her bon vivant former partner, claiming damages and accusing him of orchestrating a press campaign against her. Whether Gordon could organise a piss-up in a Scottish brewery is open to debate. However Sonia Land had originally obtained an injunction against Gordon, who has set up his own agency in association with rivals Curtis Brown, forbidding him to contact any of his former authors. At a recent hearing the injunction was lifted and Gordon was again allowed to represent 59 of his former clients who had written to withdraw from Sheil-Land.

The Society of Authors has become involved in the dispute as more and more Gordon clients seek advice about their rights, while both Fay Weldon and Sue Townsend are obtaining independent legal advice.

At issue is the vexed question of whether Sheil-Land should continue to receive the income stream for Gordon's authors who are under contract though have not yet delivered their manuscripts. Gordon and Curtis Brown are contending that the practice in the trade is for such income to be split 50-50 between the old and new agencies. Sonia Land, however, disagrees and is claiming the income in full.

Since agents are not signatories to publishers' contracts, one Gordon client has instructed her publishers to pay any monies due under her contract directly to Gordon at Curtis Brown. Sonia Land will almost certainly sue her, but if enough of Gordon's authors follow this example, will Sonia Land damn the reputation of her agency by scattering writs like confetti?

Gordon's contacts in the media have proved loyal, though their actions have hardly been instigated by him (Gordon has been cowering with a glass of whisky under his new desk for weeks). The *Times*, which has given prominent and favourable coverage to his plight, boasts several Gordon clients — including the paper's editor, Peter Stothard; Stothers's wife Sally Emmerson; assistant editor Matthew D'Ancona; and *Times Magazine* editor Nicholas Wapshott.

☐ OH DEAR! Former Labour darling Ken Follett has written an historical novel about a young Scotsman who gets into trouble questioning the laird's privileges and who then organises coal heavers into a union!! And the Scotsman goes on about "the dignity of labour (old)"!!! No wonder Tony Blair has had to elbow him aside!

'Bookworm'

SNIPCOCK & TWEED
WHAT'LL WE DO ON SUNDAY EVENINGS NOW THAT PRIDE AND PREJUDICE IS OVER?
RadioTimes
MY WEDDING OF THE YEAR
READ A GOOD BOOK?

LITERARY REVIEW RETURNS NEXT ISSUE

LUVVIES

You've got to have steel in you somewhere. As Simon Gray says: "Actors are not luvvies, they're toughies." They should change the word.

ALAN BATES (Time Out)

Submitted by Francis Harvey.

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for similar submissions.

footnotes

HMSO — Her Majesty's Sell Off

THE unexpected decision to privatise the government publisher and bookshop HMSO was taken by deputy prime minister Michael Heseltine soon after he took up his high office in the summer.

There were two reasons: more immediate money for tax cuts; and more publishing work for private enterprise. Hezza, after all, made his fortune out of Haymarket, the publishing firm.

Hezza ordered his bagman Roger Freeman — who is widely known as the chancellor for the duchy of Heseltine — to go up to Norwich to break the dreaded news to HMSO staff on 27 September. Since then there has been nothing but trouble.

LIVID: Speaker Boothroyd

The Commons speaker Betty Boothroyd is livid that such a vital decision for parliament — HMSO publishes the Hansard reports of the Commons and the Lords, and all parliamentary papers — should have been taken during the recess without consulting her.

More ominously, publishing companies have been working out how much HMSO is worth. Last year it made a profit of about £9 million. This hardly justifies the £200 million the government hopes to earn from the sale, especially as much of the profit comes from print contracts which HMSO arranges. HMSO's strong bargaining position to secure good print prices arises mainly from the security and clout of its association with government. Remove that association and the source of much of the profit vanishes.

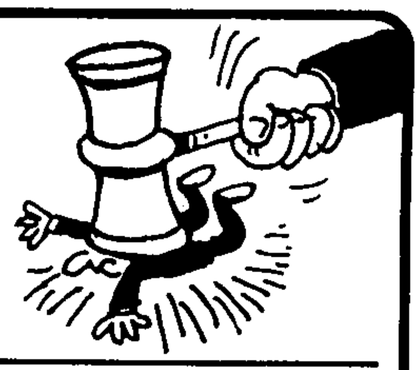
To make a reasonable profit, in short, HMSO will have to sack about 1,000 of its 2,000 workers. This will cost about £50 million. The government can't afford that much — but if the sackings aren't subsidised, who will bother to buy the stationery office?

Moreover, what will happen to all the more obscure government documents currently published by HMSO? Most of these are unprofitable, so a private firm would refuse to publish them unless they too were subsidised. Such subsidies would blow another great hole in the money from the sale. Either the government must warn an angry parliament and speaker that its publications will no longer be published — or it must stump up more subsidies.

What will happen to Hansard? At the moment a subscription to the weekly Commons Hansard, published on a non-profit basis, costs £800 a year. Very few people subscribe. MPs from all sides have been demanding that Hansard be made more widely available, but the government says it can't afford to. In fact a fully searchable complete online text of Hansard is available. It could easily and cheaply be put on the Internet. But the government is determined to keep Hansard as a valuable asset of HMSO when it is privatised. It therefore refuses to make it available to the Internet or any other database. If Hansard publications are privatised (and therefore have to make a profit) the reports will become even more expensive and even fewer people will read them. Perhaps that's what Hezza wants.

Everyone concerned — MPs, Hansard staff, HMSO workers — are shocked and apprehensive. The exceptions are Peter Macdonald, the personnel director and not magnificently brilliant accountant who came to HMSO in the 1970s; and Mike Lynn, acting chief executive. In a special briefing Lynn urges staff to "react positively", holding out the glittering prize of "reducing costs, including staffing". While salivating at the prospect of the sack, the staff can turn to a "personal message" from Macdonald calling on everyone to ensure a "smooth transition" to "growth and job stability" — not to mention a smooth transition to share options and golden handshakes (for executives only).

Beak of the Week



Mr Granville Hutchinson JP

In which the* Eye *joins in celebrations of the 75th anniversary of the British magistracy with some glimpses at magistrates' treatment of people not as well off as themselves.

■ ON 30 MARCH Selma Kiffin, who came to Britain from Jamaica to join her husband in 1990, went with her four children, aged 18 months to seven, to Wolverhampton magistrates' court to answer a summons for £484 arrears of poll tax.

She explained that the only income in her house came from her diabetic husband who was often off work and whose wages were £144 a week. His poll tax arrears were taken out of his wages at source, and there was very little left to feed the children.

The magistrates, chaired that day by Mr Granville Hutchinson JP, had it in their power to take Mrs Kiffin's arrears from husband's wages, but they decided not to do that. Instead they ordered Mrs Kiffin to be sent at once to Risley jail to serve 28 days. She was hauled from the court shouting "what will become of my children?"

The answer was that Wolverhampton social services took them into care. The cost of each child in care is £350 a week, and the weekly cost of a prison inmate, even in "grisly Risley", is £2,000. A prison officer at Risley was so shocked to see Mrs Kiffin that he contacted Richard Wise, a lawyer who specialises in such cases.

In three days Mrs Kiffin was released by order of Mr Justice Popplewell. Much later the behaviour of the Wolverhampton magistrates came up for judicial review at the divisional court. Mr Justice Buxton reduced the sentence to the three days Mrs Kiffin had already served, and annulled the arrears.

It's for Hugh

■ ALL that expensive preparation and research by the National Lotteries Charity Board seems to have come unstuck with at least one of the grants: its £80,813 to the National Gypsy Council.

The council is not a charity. It is an organisation run almost singlehandedly by Mr Hughie Smith, who has contrived over the last decade to infuriate or abuse almost every-one else who works in the field.

KING FAHD

FAHD AWAY PLACES

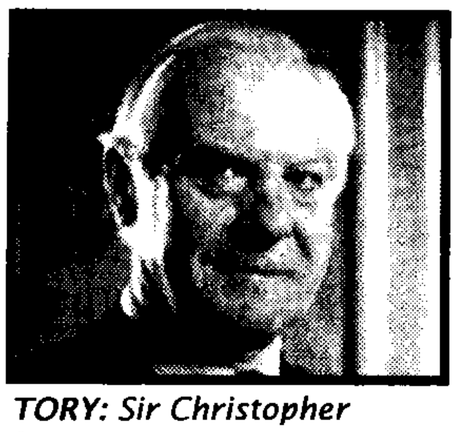
■ HOW much longer can the Saudi Arabian dynasty last? A key to its plight is the sad story of the ambitious Mr Suleiman Asuliam, who spent many years toiling away as minister of commerce.

This summer, at last, Mr Asuliam was appointed to the prestigious post of minister of finance and economic affairs. In a personal interview, King Fahd ordered him to come up with a plan to solve the dreadful liquidity crisis which is plunging the Saudi banks and economy into chaos.

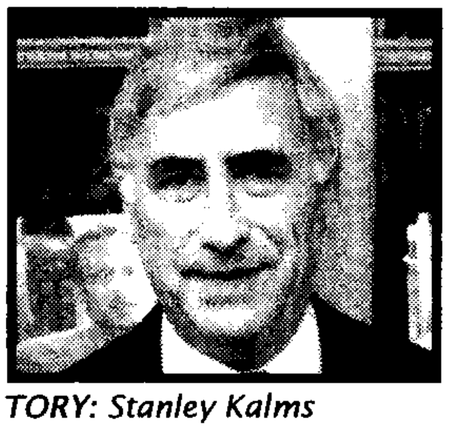
Away went Mr Asuliam. He came back with the only possible solution. The government, he said, must impose rigid controls on the export of funds.

The king said he would consider any remedy except this, and sent the minister back to the drawing board. Back he came, grovelling but insisting. Millions, if not billions, he said, were pouring out of the country to be wasted on projects which did not benefit the Saudi economy — projects like stately homes in England, for example. The finance minister could think of no other solution but rigid currency controls. There wasn't one, he said.

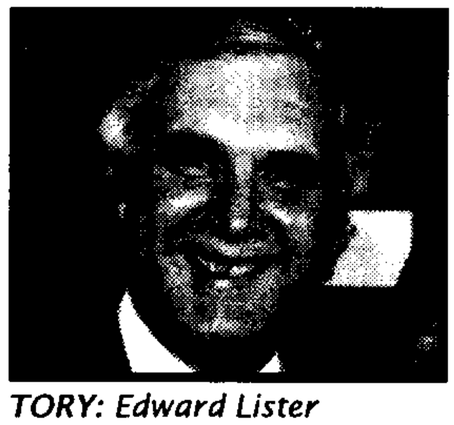
"In that case," replied the king, who with his family assiduously exports the ill-gotten gains from arms deals, commissions, etc, "you are dismissed." Mr Asuliam's long and promising career was at an end.



TORY: Sir Christopher Benson

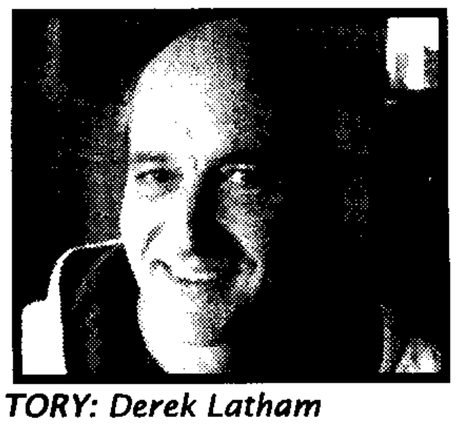


TORY: Stanley Kalms



TORY: Edward Lister

TORY: Pauline Latham



TORY: Derek Latham

A FUND OF GOOD TORIES

IF YOU want to know how wonderful life can be in a grant-maintained school, go to Belfairs Community College in Southend.

There has been no head teacher for a year. The school is run by the governors, who this week face contempt of court proceedings for ignoring injunctions against them; and the contract to design new science buildings has gone to the husband of a prominent former member of the quango which provided the college's cash: the Funding Agency for Schools.

Marie Younie, who had excellent references, was appointed head teacher when the school was controlled by Essex county council in 1991. In 1993 the school became grant-maintained and power passed into the hands of the governors. Soon afterwards a new bursar was appointed — a military man called Tim Ellis. Almost at once there was an argument between the bursar and the head as to who should manage the school and sign the cheques. In October last year, while she was in hospital for a life-threatening operation, Marie Younie was suspended.

"You're fired... er... no you're not"

Dissension racked the school. In March this year the finance officer Brigitte Bertram resigned, complaining that she could no longer work with the bursar. Though Marie Younie was fit to return to work in the spring, she was not allowed to do so. Instead she was hauled in front of a disciplinary committee. The charges against her were extremely vague — "inability to delegate... apparent lack of confidence of staff".

In August a meeting of about 60 parents called on the governors to suspend the disciplinary proceedings and tell parents what was going on. Instead the governors went ahead with another disciplinary hearing. Marie Younie's union, the National Association of Head Teachers, won a high court injunction stopping any hearing until the governors' actions could be tested in court.

On 21 September the governors announced that the head teacher had been sacked. This was such an obvious contempt of court that the union applied to commit the governors to prison. At once the governors reversed their decision, announced that Ms Younie had not been sacked after all and admitted that their decision to sack her was beyond their powers.

Coral on a reef

The whole school is now split into factions, for and against the governors. One teacher who refused to join the governors' chorus against Marie Younie was Coral Garcia. She took Marie Younie's daughter Justine for individual tuition since there is no Spanish course at Justine's school. Despite an outstanding teaching record, Coral Garcia has been made redundant.

The governors of Belfairs — the usual bunch of worthies, a Tory councillor-solicitor, a former town clerk, the wife of the local Tory agent, etc, etc — have been advised throughout the controversy by the Grant Maintained Schools Centre. The centre, which is run from High Wycombe by a former drama teacher called Adrian Pritchard, recommended a firm of architects in Derbyshire, Derek Latham and Company, to design the new science blocks. As early as September 1994 Latham's was billing the school a preliminary £7,710 for its estimates.

The money for grant-maintained schools comes from a government quango called the Funding Agency for Schools, which dishes out about £130 million a year. When Latham's got the Belfairs contract, a prominent member of the agency was Pauline Latham, Derek Latham's wife and a former Conservative spokeswoman on education on Derbyshire county council.

An agency spokesman told the *Eye* that a total of £348,000 had gone to Belfairs school. Asked how much agency money had gone to Latham's at Belfairs or anywhere else, the spokesman replied: "I don't know. It's up to the schools to decide which architect they want. I'm sure Mr Latham is involved because he mail-shots a lot of GM schools advertising his services, so I'm sure there are a lot of schools that use him. But we have no record of how much he was paid." Mrs Latham, he said, would have i) declared any interest whenever a bid was made, ii) left the room and iii) not taken any part in any discussion. A few weeks ago, he concluded, Mrs Latham left the agency "for personal reasons".

HEAD ON A CHARGER: Marie Younie (right) and her daughter Justine

Come on you blues!

In the *Sunday Telegraph* of 22 October, Roger Witts, the Funding Agency for Schools' communications director, complained: "Far too often politics interferes with the education process." What sort of politics is likely to interfere with the Funding Agency for Schools?

The chairman is Sir Christopher Benson, chairman of Sun Alliance, which gives £50,000 a year to the Tory party (and which also provides back-up insurance for some GM schools). Other members include: Sir Robert Balchin, former chairman of the South East Tory party and current chairman the Grant Maintained School Centre, which depends on funds from grant maintained schools; Stanley Kalms, chairman of Dixons, which has imposed its name on a Bradford school and which gives £25,000 a year to the Tory party; Councillor Edward Lister, an employee of the security company ADT, which has imposed its name on a Surrey grant-maintained school that is funded by the agency, and has installed security systems in 17 schools in Wandsworth where Mr Lister is leader of the Tory council; and Lee Karu, a young barrister who won't tell the *Eye* why he is on the agency but is unlikely not to have been warmly recommended by the head of his chambers, Desmond de Silva QC, who for years has been a member of the Thatcherite Centre for Policy Studies study group on crime.

Add in a few heads of opted-out schools and the quango emerges as a clutch of dedicated Tories, many of whose firms, organisations or schools benefit from the taxpayers' money it manages.

Marie Younie, meanwhile, says she is "utterly bewildered" by the events of the past year. "I still don't know what I am meant to have done wrong. I feel sure, though, that this would not have happened if the school had stayed in the hands of the local authority."

Wind pills of their mind

■ CHRIS PURSER, a financial consultant in Thirsk, Yorks, enjoyed the piece in the last *Eye* about paracetamol.

He suffers from recurring migraine, his partner from severe liver damage. Both need heavy doses of painkillers and have for years been worried about the liver damage which paracetamol in large quantities can cause. They were delighted to hear in 1992 that a new pill called Pameton, incorporating methionine, which safeguards the liver, had become available.

Last month the *Eye* put it to the paracetamol industry that Pameton had been deliberately undersold and hidden from the public so as not to spoil the huge sales of paracetamol. A spokesman denied it utterly, claiming that Pameton had been easy to get but had not been popular, partly because it was smelly and caused flatulence.

Mr Purser's experience is very different. Two big branches of Boots, he says, "refused point blank" to order Pameton for him. It was only when he begged a friendly local pharmacist to order it specially that a packet of 60 Pametons finally arrived. This cost him £4.60, compared to £1 for 100 paracetamol. The pills, he says, were not smelly, did not cause flatulence and worked perfectly well. But he couldn't afford them.

You can write to Paul Foot at 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or leave a message for him on 0171 287 3183

In the City

BARINGS nemesis Nick Leeson's Pauline conversion on the road to Changi to the wonders of Singapore justice may owe as much to his future finances as to the prospects of a plea bargained shorter jail sentence in return for pointing the finger at those who failed to control him and then covered up that failure.

Cutting short an otherwise elongated German extradition process, not to mention dropping any appeal to the European court, may bring tears to the wallets of Leeson's London lawyers Kingsley Napley but it could ensure that more of the £450,000 from the book and the suggested £1 million from the film will be his to enjoy, as will any other assets in faraway places.

Singapore lawyers are not cheap. But cutting a deal to plead guilty to one or two charges will be a lot more cost-efficient than a trial. Leeson after all is a trader — be it a none too successful one after losing £550 million before doing a "runner". So with no chance of any rescue bid by the British authorities and the German odds heavily stacked in favour of him heading for Singapore, now was the time to do a deal. Indeed his local lawyer John Koh is said to have been exploring a deal with his former colleagues in the commercial affairs department well before the Singapore government inspectors' report was published last month with its incrimination of local directors James Bax and Simon Jones and Barings chief executive Peter Norris.

The probability of Singapore taking action against Bax and Jones has always been on the cards, even though Bax was sufficiently confident to return from several weeks holiday in Britain. That no doubt inspired Leeson. But the report's strong criticism of Norris gave Leeson a much better escape route. He, like Bax, had discussions with Norris on the latter's visit to Singapore a week before the crash. Leeson also had meetings with Bax and Jones to discuss his dealings, the £50 million "discrepancy" that began to unravel secret account 88888 and what the local auditors and London head office were to be told.

A Leeson guilty plea and cooperation will give Singapore what it wants — to show that it can punish the guilty. It would also form the basis for a prosecution against any other target. In return Leeson could find himself facing considerably less than the 14 years hard labour his lobbyists were claiming.

However, the price could be that Leeson will have to sing loud and long, not just about his former colleagues (who until now he claimed were guilty only of ignorance and/or negligence) but also some of his close friends on the SIMEX trading floor. Just how much those traders who dealt through Leeson and who operated close to him on the floor knew about his problems remains a mystery.

Certainly his "long" positions on the Japanese market were no secret. But the fact that these were not "hedged" but represented mega-million losses was known only to Leeson or anybody he told. And anyone who knew only had to go short, continue to sell into Leeson, who was supporting the market, and wait until Barings choked to win big. (Just how big was seen when the Bank of England failed to rescue Barings, resulting in a further £300 million being added to the losses by the resulting market collapse.) Whether anyone did exactly that is the focus of inquiries by both Singapore and the Barings administrators. What is certain is that what Leeson lost others made.

The sudden decision by Leeson to "kow tow" and switch to a diet of giant helpings of humble noodles is only smart if he wants to avoid doing hard time in Singapore. But even so Singapore is likely to insist that he serves enough time in Changi to save face after all the rude things he and his lobbyists said about Singapore's courts. But the government is now likely also to want to show the world that Leeson was wrong. And it might also see reason for Leeson to serve at least some of his sentence in Britain.

The real losers in this deal are those gullible MPs and journalists who eagerly jumped aboard the anti-Singapore bandwagon driven by Leeson PR man Rodney Tyler and lawyer Stephen Pollard. So much now for the "full story" about the Barings collapse not coming out without a British trial and the need to save true Brit Leeson from the evil clutches of Dr Fu Man Chu with his rigged courts and inhumane jails. How's it feel to be had? Presumably like Barings.

THAT lovable Tory backbencher Terry Dicks is the latest MP to discover that there are risks as well as rewards in those lucrative non-executive directorships.

Like fellow Tories Barry Porter and Ray Whitney, Dicks has been embarrassed to find a company folding underneath him. Since 1992 Dicks, the soon to be ex-MP for Hayes & Harlington, has been a director of management consultants Dorcan Investments, run by husband and wife John and Janet Cubberley.

On 15 July Dicks resigned his directorship estimated to be worth up to £15,000 a year. On 14 August a petition was presented by a creditor to wind-up Dorcan. That petition was granted on 4 October. There being few assets, the official receiver has been appointed to liquidate Dorcan. All this no doubt came as a highly unpleasant shock to Terry Dicks. As did the need last year for Dorcan to write off £50,000 following the liquidation of a company called Graftcode.

SHAREHOLDERS, the government is fond of proclaiming, own companies, not directors; and they can use their voting power to block board decisions and eject incompetent directors. The reality is that directors hold all the cards as City institutions, who are the real owners, rarely take public action no matter how pathetic the performance of directors.

Take, for example, the disaster that is Sterling Publishing Group. As recently as July 1994 the shares were at a peak of 200p. They are now 28p having been 20p. Back in summer 1994 Sterling directors were confidently forecasting profits of £8 million for the year to March 1995. The outcome was a loss of £8 million plus, helped by the need to write off more than £3 million against bad debts from Eastern Europe.

Nor is this the first time Sterling has nose-dived into the red. The company has made losses in three of the past five years. And yet the institutional investors still retain a touching faith in managing director Michael Summers, who has now presided over two near fatal crises for the company and was supposed to be on his way out six months ago.

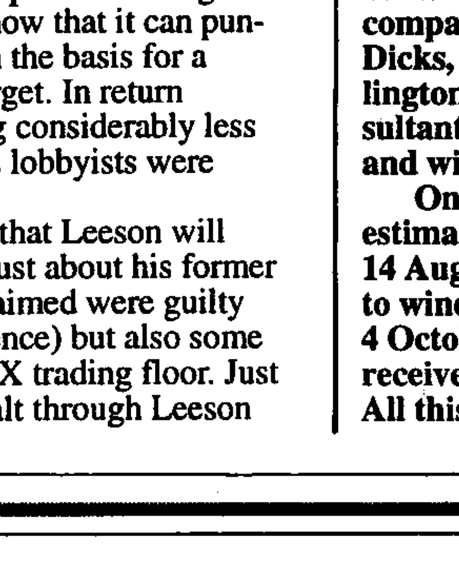
They similarly have retained support for all but one of the directors who presided over the latest debacle. Apart from supporting the appointment of a non-executive director, merchant banker Panton Corbett, a chum of non-exec chairman Roger Harrison, the institutions have insisted on no board changes. They are quite prepared to leave the fate of their clients' money to those who have already lost almost all of it.

So who are the men who have chosen to be sheep and allow Summers and his fellow incompetents to retain their highly paid jobs and who remained silent at last week's shareholders' meeting? The board's main ally has been David (Baaa) Boyle of Mercury Asset Management, proud owners of 9.2 million shares or 20 percent. Lucky holders of more than 3 percent are Legal & General and Fidelity. Others who have remained supine in the face of the disappearing profits and collapsing share price include insurers Scottish Widows, the pension funds of British Telecom, British Gas and the Post Office, together with fund managers Gartmore, Edinburgh, Prolific, Foreign & Colonial and Schroders. Their clients are no doubt duly grateful. Some fund managers have taken action — adopting the usual way out of voting with their feet.

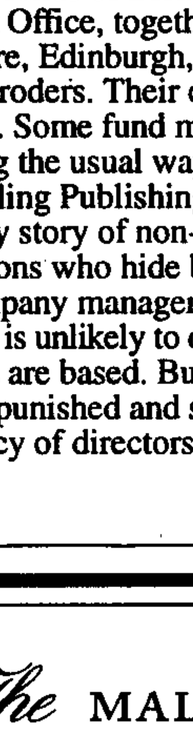
Sterling Publishing is yet one more chapter in the sorry story of non-intervention by apathetic City institutions who hide behind the excuse that they are not company managers. It may also be relevant that one loss is unlikely to dent the performance on which bonuses are based. But by doing nothing failure goes unpunished and small shareholders are left at the mercy of directors well past their sack by date.

'Slicker'

A WRITER



The MALT



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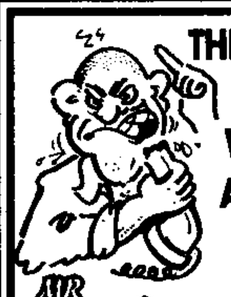

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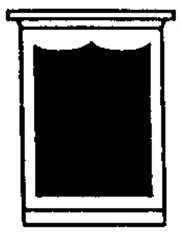

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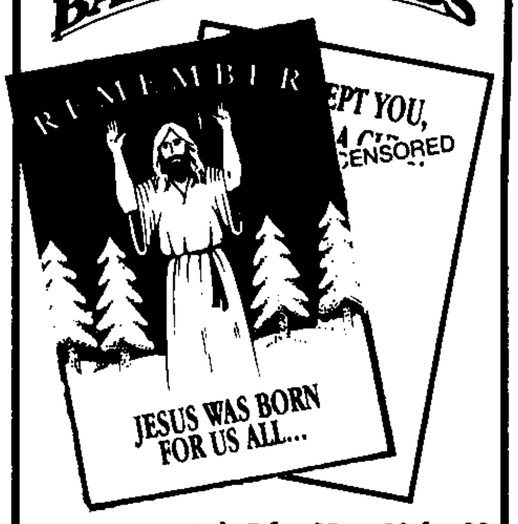

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QUOTE

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The Times

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OMAR — thank you for info on Tim B. Will respond.

HEDLEY/MILLER: Anthony Johnson Hedley and Andrea Marilyn Miller will be married on January 12th in Hong Kong. "Married in a hurry; stuck for good!" Yiddish Proverb.

SPEECHWRITING by Mitch Murray. See Page 30.

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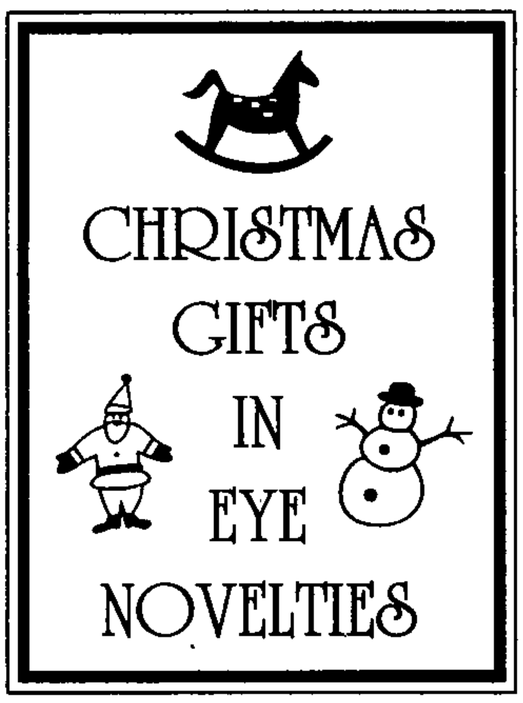

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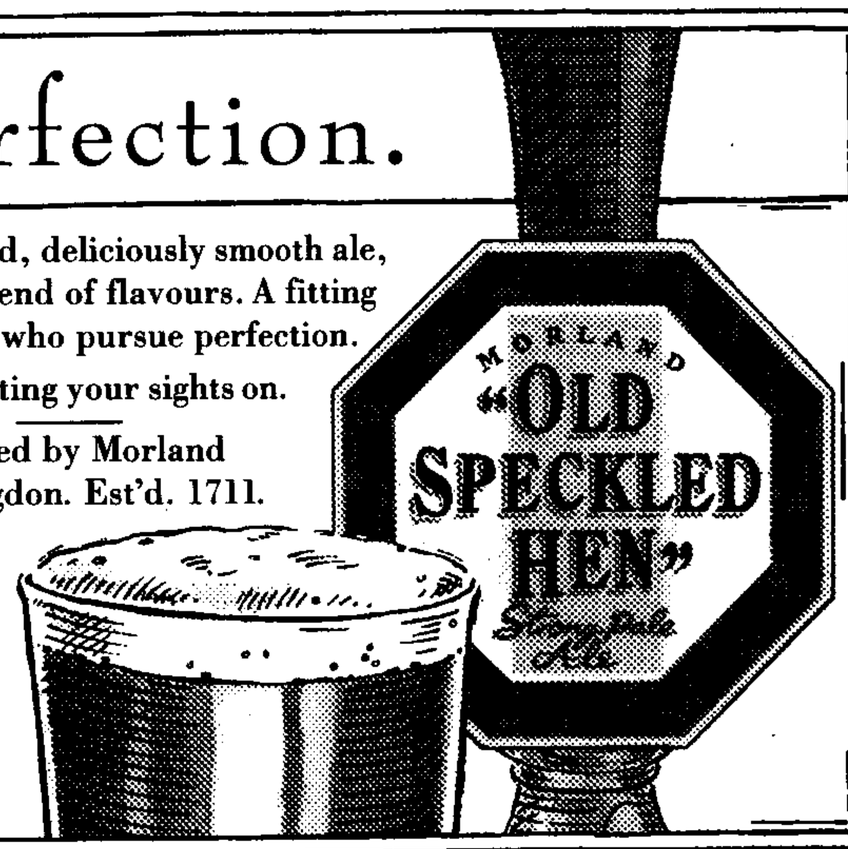

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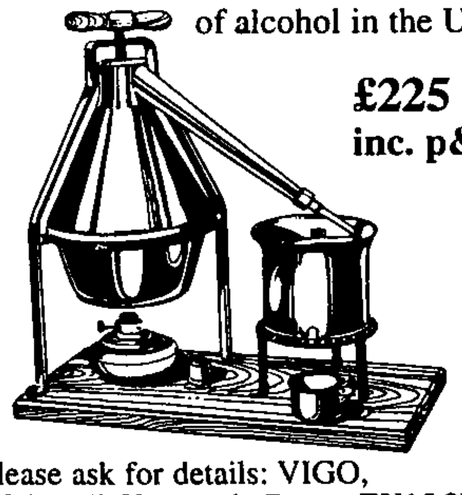

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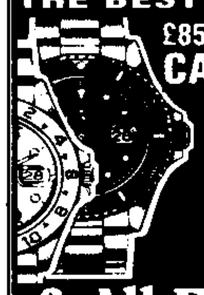

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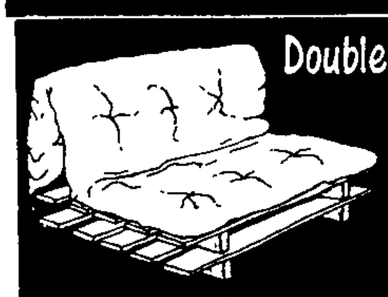

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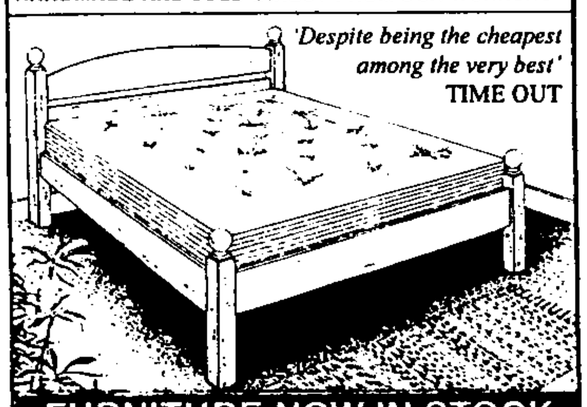

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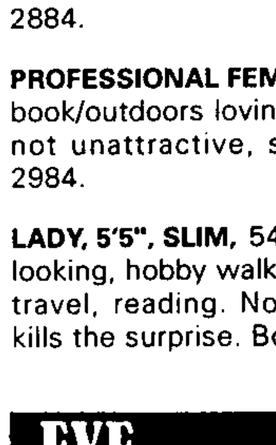

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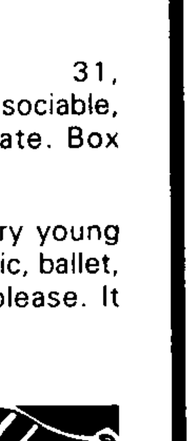

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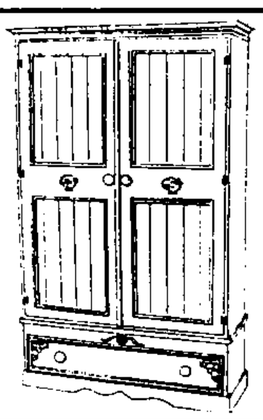

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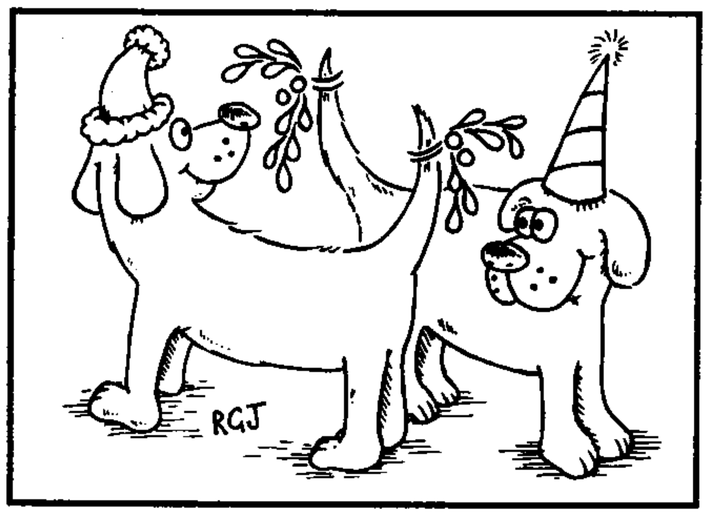

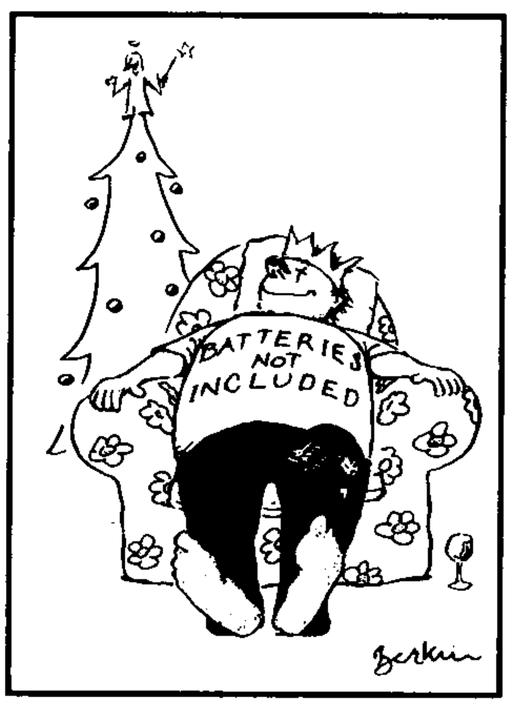

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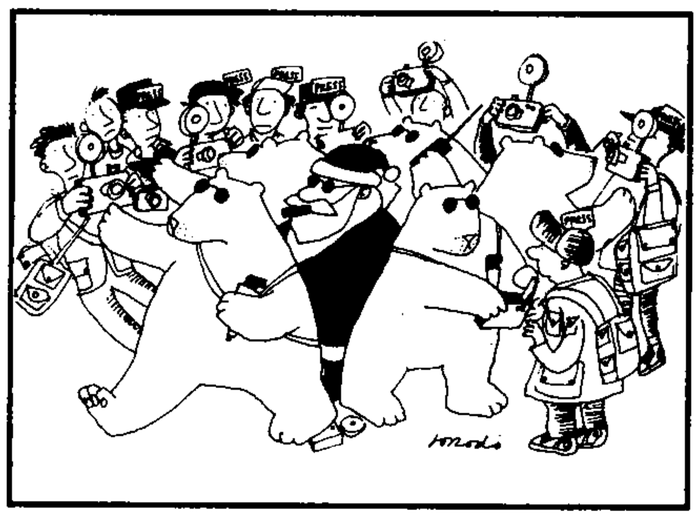

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